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**Mandates Manual May 2018**

Errors and Omissions Excepted.

Version 1.01

USI Policy is passed at USI Congress each year. Policy has a life of three years at which time it may be extended for a further three years. All policy and policy extensions now have validity for 3 years.

Whilst we are engaged in a process of standardisation, policies with novel formatting are preserved with that formatting in order to retain the integrity of the policy as considered at Congress.

Nothing in the policy file should be taken to mean any mandate on the President of NUS-USI, who may only be mandated by NUS-USI Conference.

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The USI Policy Manual 2015 details all motions passed at USI Congress.

USI policy has a three-year life span before it lapses.

# ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & QUALITY ASSURANCE

EM 1 (AAQA): Merging Students’ Unions

Proposed by WIT Students’ Union

Congress Notes:

The recent enactment of the Technological University Act has put forward the imminent establishment of Technological Universities in Ireland.

Congress Further Notes:

The merging and restructuring of Students' Unions will be expected during the process of two or more IOT's merging.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs of USI to research and write a best practice for merging Students' Unions document based on examples of third level institutes who have already merged in the past to be completed by SUT+ 2018.

Motion Passed

## NC18 AAQA 1 : Engaging ​Postgraduate ​Issues

### Proposed ​by: ​Vice ​President ​for ​Academic ​Affairs

#### 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.

## 2018 AA 1 : Integrated Pharmacy Masters Campaign

### Proposed by University College Cork Students’ Union

#### Congress Notes:

A new integrated Pharmacy Masters’ degree has been introduced in Ireland, beginning with the Pharmacy class of 2020. As a result of the new masters, Pharmacy students are no longer authorised to receive payment for their mandatory placements in every phase of the degree. Additionally, they are no longer able to take an international placement, thus driving up the competitive nature of the placements in Ireland for many students. Fees have also increased substantially for the final year of the course to €7500; this fee increase places it in direct contrast with medicine students, who pay the same fee for all 5 years of their degree.

#### Congress Further Notes:

This issue affects all three schools of Pharmacy in Ireland, which includes students in University College Cork, the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland, and Trinity College Dublin.

#### Congress Believes:

That all students should be paid a fair wage for the placement work they undertake as part of their degree courses, and that, following on from successful campaigns for nursing students in recent years, pharmacy students are entitled to the same right to payment, as they have been in the past.

#### Congress Therfore Mandates:

That USI campaign in favour of the restoration of paid placement for Pharmacy Students nationwide, and lobby relevant parties for the reduction of fees of the final year of Pharmacy Masters.

## 2018 AA 2 : Back to Education Allowance Strategy

### Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress:

Repeals 16 AA

#### Congress Adopts:

The proposed Amended Back to Education Allowance reform paper.

## 2018 AA 3 : Placement and work based learning Strategy

### Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

#### Congress notes

The significant number of students who complete placement or work-based learning elements in order to progress in their programme of study.

#### Congress further notes

The significant value that quality placement opportunities can have for students, but that they can also create pressure on students academically and personally.

#### Congress Adopts

The USI Placement and work based learning Strategy

#### Congress Deletes:

13 AA​

## 2018 AA 4 : Accreditation for Volunteering & Participation

### Proposed by IT Tallaght Students’ Union.

#### Congress recognises:

The importance of student participation in extra-curricular activities such as clubs & societies, Students’ Unions, volunteering and civic engagement during their time in college, and the benefits that engaging in such activity brings about in terms of the overall personal development of the student.

#### Congress further recognises:

The continued promotion by Students’ Unions of students getting involved in these activities, and the associated advantages which can be conferred on students who have been active in these areas when seeking future employment.

#### Congress notes:

The development of modules and recognition within programmes which exist in some Higher Education Institutions to accredit students for their involvement and participation in these activities, in order to facilitate, recognise and encourage their non-academic as well as academic development whilst in college.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the National forum for the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education and other relevant statutory agencies to develop a national approach to accreditation to student volunteering and participation in other extra-curricular activity

Congress Repeals  
Policy 13 AA

## 2018 AA 6 : Creative Arts Student Network

### Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union

Congress notes:   
Within USI MOs, there are many creative courses across the island of Ireland. Students within these courses struggle to network and communicate with one another at any level. Networking within the creative arts is essential for progression and identification of further development.  
 Congress further notes:

Graduates from Creative Arts courses tend to have less employment opportunities available in their field.  There is a lack of information directly available to creative arts students about specific financial supports available to them.   
Congress recognises:

The need for support and promotion of such a network for creative arts students in all MOs.

Congress therefore mandates:  
The VPs for Dublin Region, BMW Region, and Southern Region to work with relevant MOs to establish a Creative Arts Student Network to facilitate peer support and networking opportunities.   
Congress further mandates:

The VPs for Dublin Region, BMW Region, and Southern Region to work on creating a list including a creative representatives from each relevant MO who will bring local creative issues to the national forefront.

## 2018 AA 7 : Class representative best practice

### Proposed by IT Carlow Students’ Union

#### Congress recognises:

Class representatives are the backbone of a Students’ Union in terms of providing a student voice on institutional activities.

#### Congress notes:

Class Representatives in some member organisations do not fully recognise the power they command.

#### Congress further notes:

The role of Class Representation, their elections and their implementation operates differently in each individual member organisation.

#### Congress mandates:

The VP Academic Affairs to coordinate a piece of research that establishes best practice across all third level HEIs in terms of electing, training and empowering Class Reps to perform their roles on a local level, bearing in mind the challenges posed by institution type and size.

#### Congress further mandates:

The VP AA and VP Campaign to develop a campaign, based on feedback from member organisations, to encourage students to run for class representative positions.

#### Congress therefore repeals 17AA6

## 2018 AA 8: USI Grant Reform Policy

### Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

#### Congress Approves:

The adoption of the USI Grant Reform Policy.

#### Congress therefore repeals:

17 AA 1, 15 AA, 14 AAQA, 11 ED 19, 10 ED 5, 16 WEL 2, 15 We 20

## 2018 AA 9: Further Education and Training Strategy

### Proposed by Union Development Working Group

#### Congress Adopts

The Further Education and Training Strategy.

## 2018 AA 11 : Academic Supports for International Students

### Proposed by the Vice President Equality and Citizenship

#### Congress notes

The increasing number of international students, from different countries, backgrounds and experiences, studying in Irish institutions.

#### Congress further notes

A lack of tailored support for international students, who face significant pressures of integration and often feel excluded in our institutions, including academic supports such as language and communication.

#### Congress recognises

The huge contribution our international students make to the social and academic life of our institutions, and the need to ensure their needs are catered for so that they can unlock their full potential.

#### Congress mandates

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to research and examine practices in institutions in academic support for international students.

#### Congress further mandates

The Vice President Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President Academic Affairs to lobby the Department for Education and Skills for international student access to tailored academic supports, including language support within the curriculum, without financial or other barriers.

## 2018 AA 12 : Anonymous Marking

### Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

Anonymous marking is the correction of examinations by a lecturer without knowing the learners name first hand.

#### Congress further notes

Leaving Certificate students entering into third level education will have already had their leaving Certificate examinations corrected anonymously.

#### Congress Believes

Anonymous marking may reduce the perception of bias marking be it accidental or otherwise.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to assist MOs in lobbying for anonymous marking within their own HEI.

## 2018 AA 13 : Postgraduate Students Strategy

### Proposed by the Postgraduate Affairs Working Group

#### Congress adopts

The Postgraduate Students Strategy.

## 2018 AA 15 : The Marketisation of Third-Level Education

### Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

#### Congress notes

Efforts by Governments and Higher Education Institutions, both in Ireland and internationally, to create a competitive environment in third-level education, especially in Higher Education.

#### Congress further notes

That this effort to marketise education damages the ethos of education as a social and public good.

#### Congress recognises

The USI’s efforts to campaign and lobby for publicly funded education and protect education as a public good.

#### Congress believes

That in Ireland the student movement is not proactively discussing or raising the dangers of marketisation and commodification of education, and must be better equipped to do so.

#### Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to develop clear policy guidance on the negative consequences of marketisation both locally and nationally, and to work with the Vice President Campaigns to create toolkits for Member Organisations to recognise and campaign against marketisation in their institutions.

## 2018 AA 16 : The Quality of Teaching in Irish Higher Education

### Proposed by the Vice President Academic Affairs

#### Repeals 14 AA 10

#### Congress notes

The efforts of USI to support the work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to date, and the strong partnership that the two organisations have fostered with one another.

#### Congress further notes

USI’s involvement with significant work around teaching quality, including: the National Learning Impact Awards, especially the Teaching Heroes Awards; collaboration on the enhancement of assessment; developing the Student QA Reviewers Pool; and supporting the development of the National Student Training Programme.

#### Congress applauds

The significant work of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education to develop The National Professional Development Framework for All Staff Who Teach in Higher Education, based on the model of reflective practice.

#### Congress believes

That the National Professional Development Framework should be recognised by students as the national tool for improving and enhancing teaching quality and academic staff support.

#### Congress further believes

That the National Professional Development Framework requires cultural change within our institutions, and in order for it to be implemented effectively, it requires significant buy-in from across the sector, including senior managers, statutory agencies, institutional staff, and Students’ Unions.

#### Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to work to support and lobby for the implementation and resourcing of the National Professional Development Framework.

## 2018 AA 17 : European Education Area

### Proposed by: Vice President Academic Affairs

#### Congress notes

The proposed European Education Area (EEA) and new “Sorbonne Process”.

#### Congress notes with concern

That this new EEA is being developed by the European Union, and may potentially create conflicts of interest with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the further development of the Bologna Process, of which USI is highly supportive.

#### Congress believes

That judgement on the EEA should be reserved, and that without concrete proposals from the European Commission, the EEA may create a “two-tier Bologna” that will inevitably further a destructive agenda of competition in Higher Education across Europe.

#### Congress further notes

The potential creation of a European Student Card under this new process, and the pilot initiative, in relation to the potential roll-out of the card, currently being undertaken by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland (CSSI).

#### Congress notes with concern

That the purpose and parameters of this Student Card has not been clearly defined, and may represent a move to hold student data at a European level, without real consultation from students.

#### Congress mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs to liaise with the European Students’ Union (ESU) and continually update National Council on developments of the EEA.

#### Congress further mandates

The Vice President Academic Affairs and Vice President Welfare to ensure the voice of USI members is heard through the Irish pilot of the European Student Card being rolled out by the Confederation of Student Services in Ireland.

## 2018 AA 18 : National Student Partnership Agreement

### Proposed by: Academic Affairs Working Group

#### Repeals 17 AA 5

#### Congress notes

Efforts to date to enhance student engagement in their education through the work of the National Student Engagement Programme, of which USI is a proactive partner.

#### Congress further notes

The increasing awareness of the concept of students as partners in their education, and developments both locally and nationally to embed the student voice in all aspects of our institutions.

#### Congress believes that

Developing ‘Student Partnership Agreements’ between Institutions and Students’ Unions is a positive and constructive avenue through which student participation, representation, and engagement can be fostered, while ensuring the ethos of Students’ Unions as autonomous decision-making organisations is protected.

#### Congress further believes that

There is significant appetite to take a national approach to student partnership.

#### Congress recognises

The commitment by the Minister for Higher Education to work with USI to develop a national approach to the student voice, both through a Framework on Supporting Students’ Union, and through the exploration of Student Charters and Partnership Agreements.

#### Congress mandates

The USI President and the USI Vice President Academic Affairs to work with the Department for Education and Skills, and all other relevant stakeholders, to lobby for and develop a National Student Partnership Agreement.

#### Congress further mandates

That any development of a National Student Partnership Agreement should proactively engage students at every stage.

## 2018 AA 19: Class Rep Recognition

### Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

#### Congress believes

Class Representatives form the backbone of SU and institutional activities in terms of providing a representative student voice within an institution.

#### Congress notes

The role of class representatives is increasingly being recognised by the HEA and QQI, through national initiatives such as the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).

#### Congress further notes

Class Representatives involvement is crucial to the success of such programmes and this involvement needs to be commended and recognised.

#### Congress recognises

Student time is becoming increasingly scarce due to the nature of semesterisation, and that therefore it is not always possible for them to fully and actively engage with programmes such as the NStEP, and the other functions associated with the role of a class representative.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The USI VP Academic Affairs to work with the HEA and QQI to look into the feasibility of rolling out formal recognition in the form of accreditation for the position of class representative, similarly to how standard modules are accredited. This accreditation would not replace credits required to complete the learning outcomes but would however add on the the students’ degree as additional credits.

## 2018 AA 20 : Postgraduate Student Funding

### Proposed by Dublin City University Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

that at present not all postgraduate students can avail of the student assistance fund in their HEI.   
  
Congress believes

that HEI's must be inclusive and supportive of postgraduate students in tough economic situations.   
  
Congress therefore mandates the VP Education

to investigate this matter and where this issue is present to campaign  
to the relevant authority to ensure all pg students have access to vital funding support.

17 NC/AA 05 Early Education and Carers Campaign   
National Council Notes:  
Early years workers and providers are dedicated and passionate about delivering a quality service that focuses on the needs of children and realising their full potential. Workers are paid too little and are struggling to make ends meet. The cost of Early Years services in Ireland are among the highest in Europe, an average of over €750 per child per month. However most early years educators are earning less than the living wage.   
   
National Council Applauds:  
The ‘Big Start’ campaign led by SIPTU and the efforts to build a coalition of organisations and groups on the issue.   
  
National Council Acknowledges:  
A lack of State investment where Ireland spends only 25% of the European average investment in early years services. Lack of empirical evidence to show that early education and carers students and graduates are looking for recognition of the sector and a living wage and if other issues exist.   
  
National Council Mandates:  
The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to work with the relevant trade unions, and other organisations, to assess the issues that may exist and to further mobilise students on a campaign on the issues of: pay, work, and recognition of the sector.  
   
National Council Also Mandates:  
The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.

### 17 AA2 Fees Sanctions

Congress Notes:  
That many students are unable to pay their fees by the deadline put in place by each Third Level Institute.  
Congress Further Notes:  
That there is no best practice guidelines in place to deal with the issue of late fee payment of students.  
  
Congress Further Notes:  
That in an attempt to encourage to students to pay their fees, they can be locked out of online resources including moodle and emails.  
  
Congress Further Notes:  
That this is resulting in students becoming very distressed, as the sanctions put in place are having a direct negative impact on each of the students academics, as students are unable to access upload continues assessments or sit online exams.  
  
Congress Mandates  
The President to lobby the HEA to set up a Sub group to examine best practice guidelines in relation to sanctions for late fee payment.

### 17 AA3 Borrowing model of IOTs

##### Congress notes

There is a huge crisis in relation to the current financial state of many IOTs across the country. IOTs are not allowed to borrow money in the such ways Universities can. According to recent reports in the media, currently there are six Institutes of Technology in a vulnerable state.

##### Congress further notes

This causes huge issues for IOTs regarding progress and helping to advance their status the same way Universities can. This can also come into effect as IOTs cannot borrow money to help with the accommodation crisis, and they cannot borrow money to build.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The USI President as a member of the HEA board to highlight with the HEA and lobby the government for IOTs to access additional funding the same way Universities can access it.

### 17 AA4 Student Participation in Governance

##### Congress:

Repeals 15 AAQA 8 and 14 AAQA 6

##### Congress notes:

That student participation in the academic governance of their institution is integral to ensuring that the perspective of the learner is embedded and reflected in decision-making.

##### Congress further notes:

Tertiary-level education is becoming increasingly marketised and competition-driven, with HEI Management engaged in strategic work around recruitment, marketing, and internationalisation. Students are increasingly denied a role in academic governance, creating a democratic deficit in our institutions.

##### Congress believes that:

Students and student representatives are partners in their education, and should have a key role to play in governance throughout structures in their institutions.

Congress recognises:

- The experiences of MOs in student participation and institutional democracy is varied.

- The work to date with NStEP on institutional analysis and academic representation.

- The work to date with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning on partnership.

##### Congress mandates the President and the VP Academic Affairs:

- To carry out diagnostic work with MOs to get a broader picture of institutional democracy and student representation in governance structures.

- To create resources around best practice examples of democratisation and decentralisation of institutional governance structures.

- To work with individual MOs, as appropriate, to support efforts to improve student participation in academic governance.

### 17 AA6 Class Rep Best Practice

##### Congress Notes:

Class reps are the backbone of a Students’ Union in terms of providing a student voice on institutional activities.

##### Congress Further Notes:

The role of Class Rep , their elections and their implementation operates differently in each individual Member Organisation.

Congress Mandates:  
The VP Academic Affairs to coordinate a piece of research that establishes best practice across all third level HEIs in terms of electing, training and empowering Class Reps to perform their roles on a local level, bearing in mind the challenges posed by institution type and size.

### 17 AA7 Class Rep Accreditation

#### REFERRED BACK TO NEXT AA WORKING GROUP – IS NOT ADOPTED AS POLICY BY CONGRESS

##### Congress Believes:

Class Representatives form the backbone of SU and institutional activities in terms of providing a representative student voice within an institution.

##### Congress Notes:

The role of class representatives is increasingly being recognised by the HEA and QQI, through national initiatives such as the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP).

##### Congress Further Notes:

Class Representatives involvement is crucial to the success of such programmes.

##### Congress Recognises:

Student time is becoming increasingly scarce due to the nature of semesterisation, and that therefore it is not always possible for them to fully and actively engage with programmes such as the NStEP, and the other functions associated with the role of a class representative.

##### Congress Therefore Mandates:

The USI VP Academic Affairs to work with the HEA and QQI to look into the feasibility of rolling out accreditation for the position of class representative, similarly to how standard modules are accredited.

### 17 AA8 Multi-campus support

##### Congress notes

There are many colleges with multi-campuses. Multiple campuses are important in delivering education to regional communities.

##### Congress further notes

That in setting up multi-campuses there was additional funding provided. That funding has since stopped, giving no help to colleges to support the running of the many satailte campuses. This has resulted many colleges facing satellite campus closures, and high financial difficulty.

##### Congress therefore mandates

USI President and VP AA to put pressure on TDs and the HEA to support the fact that multi-campus’ need more support to sustain a comfortable financial state and security for the survival of these vital campuses.

### 17 AA10 Shared Feedback Standards

##### Congress Notes:

Current assessment and feedback structures vary across all institutions. This results in highly varied teaching standards. Students are suffering as a result.

##### Congress Also Notes:

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning have chosen "Assessment Of/For/As Learning " as their most recent enhancement theme. It places a special focus on assessment in Irish higher education.

##### Congress Further Notes:

ISSE data collected since its initiation, which indicates  that first year students experience a low level of interaction with lecturing staff.

##### Congress Mandates:

VP AA to engage with the Department of Education, QQI and HEA to introduce shared standards for feedback on assessed work across all third level institutions that improves the students' experience and develops quality of assessment across the country.

### 17 AA11 Motion on residency criteria for returning emigrants

##### Congress notes

That students who have not lived in Ireland or another EU member state for 3 of the last 5 years do not qualify for EU tuition fee levels or the student maintenance grant, regardless of their nationality and/or citizenship.

##### Congress regrets

That this policy has particularly affected the many young people who emigrated from Ireland during the economic crisis. Those who wish to return to Ireland to pursue higher education at both undergraduate and postgraduate level face significantly higher non-EU fee levels as a result of their residency in a non-EU state. In practice, this serves as an incentive to defer or reconsider repatriation.

##### Congress also regrets

That for a huge number of emigrants, emigration has not been a “lifestyle choice”. Hundreds of thousands of people have emigrated from Ireland over the past 10 years and many of whom did so under the obligation of a scarcity of opportunity.

##### Congress accordingly asserts

That it is unjust to penalise those Irish citizens who were forced by external circumstances to seek opportunities abroad. Moreover, the current policy is inconsistent with government strategy to incentivise the repatriation of those same emigrants.

##### Congress believes

That returning emigrants should be subject to less strict conditions of residency in order to quality for EU fee levels and student supports

##### Congress therefore mandates

Officer board to liaise with the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority to pursue the implementation of less strict conditions of residency for these people.

## 16 AAQA 1 **BTEA Reform Paper**

#### Congress Adopts

The proposed Back to Education Allowance reform paper (Available on USI Website)

## 16 AAQA 2 **Academic Calendar Committee**

#### Congress recognises

That academic calendar arrangements, particularly in Institutes of Technology have been identified by previous meetings of Congress as problematic in many cases.

#### Congress also recognises

The lack of established consensus as to what constitutes “best practice” in terms of issues such as the position of exams, revised timelines for appeal, etc. This makes it difficult to proceed with existing mandates.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The VPAAQA to establish an ad-hoc Academic Calendar committee, to meet during at least three meetings of National Council. This group shall work to fulfil Congress policy relating to academic calendar arrangements.

#### Congress also mandates

The VP AAQA to report to National Council on an ongoing basis as to the group’s progress, and to submit a report on behalf of the group to the next annual meeting of USI Congress.

## 16 AAQA **3 Motion to call for a state agency to support student partnership**

#### Congress Affirms

That student partnership is an effective, student-centric model for student engagement.

#### Congress Notes

The success of student partnership as a model for student engagement in international contexts, including but not limited to Scotland, Wales, and England. For each, some form of publicly funded agency for the third level sector has been established to support student engagement in the quality of the learning experience.

#### Congress Also Notes

Significant recent developments in Ireland in relation to student partnership, including but not limited to the outcomes of the HEA working group on student engagement, USI’s development with the HEA and QQI of a training scheme for class and school representatives, and institutional engagement with Student Participation in Quality Scotland (Sparqs).

#### Congress calls for

The establishment of a publicly funded agency, congruent with the Sparqs (Scottish) model, to support the third level sector in enhancing student partnership in the quality of their learning experience.

#### Congress repeals

Policy 12 AAQA 2

#### Congress adopts

The proposed USI Student Partnership Statement.

## 16 AAQA 4 **Non-EU fee regulation**

#### Congress Acknowledges

That a large number of third level institutions have responded to a contraction in state funding by endeavouring to attract students of “nonEU” fee status. These students do not qualify for the HEA “free fees” scheme and, as such, pay a much higher fee to attend higher education in Ireland.

#### Congress Regrets

That these students are, in effect, regarded as “cash cows” by institutions, which in many cases fail to distribute the appropriate resources to support services and student organisations to cater their activities towards a more diverse student population.

#### Congress Also Regrets

That these students do not enjoy a significant degree of fee level certainty, such is the wont of institutions to increase fee levels on an almost annual basis. As well as representing an issue of esteem, many non EU students from countries prioritised for recruitment take large commercial loans to fund their education in Ireland. These students are particularly affected by changes in fee level as they will have been required before starting college to budget up to six years in advance (in the case of longer courses).

#### Congress Asserts

That non EU students deserve, at an absolute minimum, full certainty as to their fee obligations for the entire course of their degree.

#### Congress mandates

That USI, as an organisation, is opposed to the current national policy of unregulated non-EU fees.

#### Congress also mandates

The VP Equality & Citizenship and the VP AAQA to research the effects of unregulated non-EU fees on the non-EU student population and to present a report on the issue to National Council before the end of 2016.

#### Congress further mandates

The President to present the findings of the research to the Higher Education Authority.

## 16 AAQA 5 **Casualisation of labour amongst Postgraduate research** students

##### Congress commends

The work of Third Level Workplace Watch in highlighting the precarious conditions and casualisation of labour within higher level education sector.

##### Congress further notes

The Trinity News Investigation (Thursday, Jan 28th) that highlighted that post-graduate research students are being cajoled into taking on more teaching duties without compensation.

##### Congress further notes

The detrimental effect this has on the abilities of these students to properly pursue their research and the impact this occurrence places upon their mental wellbeing.

##### Congress mandates

The VP AAQA to investigate the extent to which this occurs across the third level sector and to report the findings to National Council.

## 16 AAQA 6 **Postgraduate Masters in Education supports**

##### Congress Notes

Structural changes to PME (Postgraduate Masters in Education) courses in 2014. Lengthening the time of study to two years rather than one year has affected students studying the course.

##### Congress further notes:

That PME students do not get paid on placement, and there is no significant financial supports available for PME students during the course of their studies. Particularly since the postgraduate maintenance grant was abolished.

##### Congress Believes:

That PME students work long hours on placement, while also attending college lectures and creating teaching plans. Part time employment leaves the students stressed financially as they attempt to cover cost of travel, rent and living expenses.

##### Congress Mandates:

The VP Campaigns to lobby the Minister for Education and Skills.

## 16 AAQA 8 Release of repeat exam results before the academic year starts

#### Congress Notes

that the release of repeat exam results 2 to 3 weeks into the academic year is causing Mental Health issues along with students dropping out

#### Congress Condemns

the late release of repeat exam results in the academic year as it causes student to drop out, and also increases the risk of bad mental health in students

#### Congress Believes

that if the result where out before the academic year starts this would improve retention rates and would also decrease the amount of stress that student would be suffering from.

#### Congress Mandates

the VP Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to lobby the minister for Education and the TUI to get repeat results before the academic year starts.

## 15 AAQA 5 Universal fee payment dates

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress notes**

**That there are a number of different ways in which students are expected to pay their Student Contribution Charge, depending on the institution.**

#### **Congress Further Notes**

**This may create confusion among students. Furthermore some systems are more sympathetic to students than others.**

#### **Congress Mandates**

**VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students’ Unions and the relevant groups to establish universal payment dates in institutions.**

#### **Congress Further Mandates**

**VP AAQA and VP Welfare to work with Students’ Unions and the relevant groups to set a universal payment method in institutions.**

## 15 AAQA 7 Technological university supports

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress acknowledges:**

**The work, which has been done to date with MO’s going through the Technological University (TU) process.**

#### **Congress also acknowledges:**

**The integral role of Students’ Unions in these MO’s to informing students of their rights and safeguarding them in the TU process.**

#### **Congress mandates:**

**The Regional Vice Presidents to assist in the merging of Students’ Unions involved in the TU Process**

## 15 AAQA 10 Cross-border student mobility

RENEWED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress believes:**

* **Currently there is very low cross-border student mobility between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland**
* **That education should be free and fairly funded- this also goes for the students who chose to travel over the border for their education**
* **Every student should be able to access support for travel, course costs, maintenance support and studying cross-border should not be a barrier to support.**

#### **Congress notes:**

* **In 1996/97, almost one in 10 students in the NI colleges were from the Republic - 9.3%, but in 2012/13, this fell to just 5.5%.**
* **The number of RoI domiciled students enrolled in NI Higher Education Institutions in 2012/13 was 2,835 and the number of RoI students studying in FE institutions in 2012/13 was 3,324.**
* **In 2012/13 only 980 students from NI travelled over the border to study in Irish institutions.**
* **RoI students in NI often have trouble accessing the right information about the SUSI grant which is available to them, which can then lead to financial hardship.**

#### **Congress mandates:**

* **VPAAQA to work with the NUS-USI President to explore ways we can increase cross-border student mobility**
* **VPAAQA to work with NUS-USI to lobby the respective governments to provide adequate financial support for students studying over the border**

### 14 AAQA 1 USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY

**Congress notes:**

Congress policy 11/ ED 11 mandating Officer Board to compile a single comprehensive and

researched document on the public-funding model proposed through various USI policies.

**Congress applauds:**

The securing of research support from the Nevin Economic Research Institute on areas of shared concern, including initially the development of a public-funding policy for third-level on behalf of USI, as part of the SIPTU-USI Agreement.

**Congress believes:**

This provides USI with credible, well-researched and solutions-based policy for which to advance the argument in favour of our ideological position on third-level funding.

**Congress approves:**

The third-level funding policy paper developed by NERI as USI policy.

**Congress mandates:**

USI Officer Board to campaign and lobby extensively for the adoption of this policy as the roadmap for the future funding of the Irish Higher Education system, through every possible political, media and policy platform.

### 14 AAQA 2 ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS

**Congress regrets:**

The almost exclusive focus of the current third-level admissions routeon prior academic attainment.

**Congress believes:**

That taking into consideration contextual data can ensure that an individual’s true potential for performance in higher education is considered.

**Congress also believes:**

That such consideration would broaden the socio-economic demographic of the third-level student body; the current admissions system disproportionately advantages applicants from fee-paying secondary schools.

**Congress notes with approval:**

That an Irish Universities Association (IUA) alternative admissions route is being piloted in Trinity College Dublin. The alternative route shall offer 7530 students in total a place in a competitive Level 8 degree programme in September 2014 on the basis of Leaving Certificate results, performance relative to classmates, and a personal statement.

**Congress mandates:**

That the USI shall support initiatives to create an alternative common admissions route for all publicly-funded third-level institutions where contextual data, including but not limited to socio-

economic background, is considered in addition to prior academic attainment.

**Congress also mandates:**

The President to lobby for state investment in retention activities to prevent disproportionate drop out levels of those from non-traditional backgrounds.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President and the VP Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby for improved information, advice and guidance and careers information at all levels of education.

### 14 AAQA 3 CONSULTATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENT CONTRIBUTION CHARGE

**Congress notes:**

That in November 2011 USI agreed with the Higher Education Authority that HEIs were obliged towards ‘meaningful consultation’ with students on the expenditure of the student contribution charge.

**Congress regrets:**

That meaningful consultation does not occur in many institutions; most HEIs consult ineffectively and insincerely in forums where students have legally-mandated representation but are not the only representatives present.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to work with the HEA to define best practice for ‘meaningful consultation’ in the context of the distribution of the student contribution charge, and to lobby the HEA to ensure the application of this established best practice.

### 14 AAQA 9 USI PARTICIPATION IN ESU

**Congress recognises:**

That many policies and initiatives developed and agreed at European Union and European Higher Education Area level effect the Irish Higher Education system and our students.

**Congress believes:**

As a member of the European Students’ Union USI has an important role in the shaping of international policies and has the opportunity to inform national and local policies with international best practice.

**Congress mandates:**

The Officer Board members who attend each bi-annual ESU Board meeting to present a report

to the following meeting of National Council including explanations of the policies proposed and voted on by USI.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to co-ordinate a delegation, selected from National Council participants, to attend each bi-annual European Student Convention. The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance is also tasked to investigate funding opportunities to cover the associated costs.

**Congress notes:**

That legislation creating the Technological Universities has been enacted and that the development of the Dublin TU is now moving ahead quickly.

**Congress further notes:**

The agreement in principle from the three ITSUs in question to work together by way of a steering group, chaired by the USI President.

**Congress affirms:**

That student consultation in this development must be thorough and meaningful, with a view to students being seen as the key stakeholders at the table.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President to continue to assist in ensuring that this steering group is recognised at HEA and DoE’s level as the collective representative voice of the three ITSUs.

### 14 AAQA 12 FEES FOR STUDENT APPRENTICES

**Congress notes:**

The publication of the Review of Apprenticeship Training in Ireland, and the consistent focus on the importance of work-based learning and apprenticeships as part of the dialogue around the Youth Guarantee.

**Congress condemns:**

The decision taken in Budget 2014 to impose a new pro-rata Student Contribution fee burden on student apprentices.

**Congress welcomes:**

The collaboration between the USI and the TEEU in launching the ‘Axe The Tax on Training’ campaign this year.

**Congress mandates:**

The President, Vice-President for Campaigns and Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby to overturn this decision in Budget 2015 and reinstate the State contribution to this fee, in conjunction with the TEEU.

### 13 AAQA 1 ACCREDITATION FOR PARTICIPATION

**Congress recognises:**

The importance of student participation in extra-curricular activities such as clubs & societies, Students’ Unions, volunteering and civic engagement during their time in college, and the benefits that engaging in such activity brings about in terms of the overall personal development of the student.

**Congress further recognises:**

The continued promotion by Students’ Unions of students getting involved in these activities, and the associated advantages which can be conferred on students who have been active in these areas when seeking future employment.

**Congress notes:**

The development of modules and recognition within programmes which exist in some Higher Education Institutions to accredit students for their involvement and participation in these activities, in order to facilitate, recognise and encourage their non-academic as well as academic development whilst in college.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to research best practice across Higher Education Institutions in this area, with a view to developing USI policy on Accreditation for Participation which may be presented to the appropriate College bodies by Students’ Unions who wish to do so. To be completed by March 2014.

### 13 AAQA 2 STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON STUDENT UNIVERSAL SUPPORT IRELAND

**Congress notes:**

The abysmal performance of Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) in the academic year 2012/2013 with numerous quality assurance issues becoming ever increasingly obvious over the operational existence of SUSI to date.

**Congress further notes:**

The benefits of the SUSI forum established this year in order to keep MOs informed on the ongoing.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The complete lack of student representation and input into the operational management of the primary source of financial assistance for students in third level education and future students of third level.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice-President of Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby the Department of Education and City Of Dublin Vocational Education Committee

(CDVEC) for a seat on the main governing body of SUSI in order to ensure the highest levels of quality assurance in the operations of SUSI in the years ahead.

### 13 AAQA 3 STUDENT CONTRIBUTION PAYMENT SCHEME

**Congress notes:**

The increasingly difficult financial challenges being faced by students.

**Congress further notes:**

The Student Contribution falls due at a time when students have other large financial commitments such as accommodation deposits and course materials.

**Congress recognises:**

The successful scheme in NUI Galway which allows students to pay the Student

Contribution in instalments.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Campaigns to lobby the Irish Universities Association and the Institutes of Technology Ireland to implement similar schemes in all universities and Institutes of technology.

### 13 AAQA 4 MIGRANT EDUCATION ACCESS

**Congress notes:**

That in the absence of a standardised residency test Irish third-level institutions apply an ‘EU’ fees’ category which often means migrant students pay two or three times more than typical fees charged. Young people who have grown up in Ireland (gone to secondary school here) are denied access to financial assistance and the free fee scheme upon entry to third level.

**Congress also notes:**

That young people who have secured citizenship during their time in third level often unable to ‘reverse’ their fee status and have no choice but to continue to pay these high tuition fees for the remainder of their third level education. These young people are also often unable to secure higher education grants.

**Congress believes:**

That the Union of Students in Ireland needs to advocate for accessible education for all students and should lend support to the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland’s Migrant Education Access Campaign, including that children of non EU migrants who have come to Ireland to join their families and are here a minimum of 3 years should enjoy equality of access to third level education.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to work with the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland on their Migrant Education Access (MEA) campaign.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Education and Skills to take effective action to address the situation of young people who have secured Irish citizenship but are currently unable to reverse their fee status. This may require a re-examination of the criteria of access to the Free Tuition Fee Scheme currently administered by the Higher Education Authority and should result in code of practice or a revised set of criteria being outlined to all third level institutes in Ireland to ensure a coordinated, equitable and consistent response.

### 13 AAQA 5 COLLABORATIONS WITHIN ALLIANCES AND REGIONAL CLUSTERS

**Congress notes:**

The importance of input, engagement and involvement by Students’ Unions in the process of the future development of the Higher Education Landscape.

**Congress recognises:**

The considerable opportunities which exist for MO’s in delivering tangible outcomes from the process for their members by identifying best practice which exists in areas relevant to students within alliances and clusters, and lobbying for the implementation of such in all HEI’s within the alliance or cluster.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President, VP for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance and all Regional VP’s to assist MO’s in ensuring student representation is present and student input is sought in collaborative discussions taking place between HEI’s across the country, and also to assist MO’s in the identification and implementation of these best practice opportunities.

### 13 AAQA 6 GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

**Congress notes:**

That seeking employment after Third Level Education is becoming increasingly difficult for students due to economical factors and that the job hunt is becoming more competitive.

**Congress further notes:**

That employers across Ireland and the UK are ranking 'general employability skills' as one of the most important attributes they are seeking in graduates.

**Congress mandates:**

That the VP AAQA to develop a strategy for MO's to promote graduate employability and the acquisition of generic and transferable employability skills amongst their students and to offer support and materials to education officers to do so.

### 13 AAQA 7 STUDENT RETENTION

**Congress observes:**

Recent findings which suggest that the single biggest cause of students dropping out of college in first year is selection of the wrong course.

**Congress believes:**

That the current delivery of Open Days and provision of information by colleges to potential students is stale and insufficient, and in need of reform.

**Congress notes:**

Developments in online learning and technologies in recent years and the considerable and growing engagement of secondary school students with these new technologies.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI VP for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to lobby the HEA to call on HEI’s to offer online campus tours, sample lectures, and taster videos of modules and programmes for inclusion on their own individual websites and the CAO website.

### 13 AAQA 8 STUDENTS RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

**Congress acknowledges:**

Every student’s right to a quality experience and their involvement in established quality assurance procedures as an essential element of this experience.

**Congress also acknowledges:**

The integral role of Students’ Unions in informing students of their rights and safeguarding them.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The effect that the Employment Control Framework places on HEIs and their ability to comply with local, national and European legislation.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to research best practice and put together a national perspective on student rights and entitlements by Congress 2014.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to include a briefing on ‘student involvement in quality assurance’ and the rights of students that are enshrined by legislation in the overall training plan for the SUT.

This mandate is to expire after a period of 3 years, if not re-approved by Congress.

### 13 AAQA 9 STRUCTURE OF WORK PLACEMENT ELEMENTS OF HEI PROGRAMS AND THEIR USE IN LABOUR ACTIVATION SCHEMES

**Congress applauds:**

The initiative in many Higher Educational Institutes, which embeds work placements in many of their degrees, to give students real-world application of their course content.

**Congress notes:**

That a correctly structured and relevant work placement can truly enhance the learning experience of the student.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That many work placement programs are not correctly structured, are not linked to the learning outcomes associated with the academic course and ultimately do not deliver in the benefits to the students that they were designed to provide.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice President, Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to work with Member

Organisations to accumulate current policies and practices relating to work placement programmes with a view to drafting a best practice policy that Member Organisations could use as a starting point for implementing a similar policy in their own Higher Education Institute.

This Mandate shall be fulfilled by December 2013.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The inadequacies of some labour activation schemes such as internships and work placements that exist in the wider community, which result in the exploitation of workers and placements that don’t offer appropriate supervision and learning opportunities.

**Congress further notes:**

That best practice and structures that would be developed and designed in the Higher Education

Sector, could be mirrored in labour activation schemes like Jobbridge or the proposed Youth Guarantee.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President and relevant Vice Presidents to engage with relevant organisations and government departments to design and develop schemes, which are beneficial to workers and builds upon best practice in the Higher Education Sector.

This mandate shall be fulfilled by December 2014.

### 13 AAQA 10 REVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR TU DESIGNATION

**Congress notes:**

That current USI policy mandates Officerboard to lobby Government to maintain the current criteria for the re-designation of an Institute of Technology as a Technological University, while also protecting the individual nature of Institutions as part of this process.

**Congress recognises:**

The considerable developments which have taken place over the past year with respect to the ever-changing nature of the HE landscape.

**Congress observes:**

Recent discussion documentation released by the HEA suggests that the following areas require attention following the HEA’s ‘gap analysis’:

Maintenance of L6/7 provision

Excessive/unfocused increases in post graduate provision and research

Testing the validity of international student numbers

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the criteria for TU designation as currently set out may incentivise HEI’s to steer their focus in a direction that is not necessarily in keeping with their own

Institutional ethos or strengths, or in the best interests of student needs and requirements.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

USI Officerboard to call for the criteria for designation to be reviewed taking the findings of the ‘gap analysis’ into account, and on an ongoing basis as the future HE landscape continues to shape and evolve over the next three years.

### 13 AAQA 11 STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

**Congress observes:**

Recent comments by the Minister for Public Expenditure & Reform issuing a warning that the government is looking to remove underperforming teachers, and the potential appetite for change in this area.

**Congress recognises:**

The difficulties faced in the current environment by colleges and Students’ Unions in dealing effectively with student complaints.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That best practice does exist nationally within some Higher Education Institutions in developing complaints’ procedures which are more timely and efficient, afford greater student protections and offer tangible outcomes to complaints or issues which are raised than many current practices.

**Congress notes:**

The re-negotiation of the Croke Park Agreement, which is taking place in 2013.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

Appropriate members of USI Officerboard to lobby for the development and implementation of a common national Student Complaints’ Procedure, which takes into account the importance of protecting the complainant, speedy and efficient resolution of complaints, and the principles of transparency and accountability.

### 13 AAQA 12 UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

**Congress notes:**

The variance of opinions and evidence on the success or lack thereof of unpaid internship schemes.

**Congress further notes:**

Incidences have arisen of unpaid internship schemes whereby the unpaid intern was required to do work which could not be said to improve the knowledge or skill of the intern with a view to adding valuable experience to their future career prospects.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That finding employment is proving difficult for many graduates given the prevailing economic conditions and that internships may be a valuable method of gaining experience while protecting oneself from the harmful effects of long-term unemployment.

**Congress further notes:**

The increased role that internships are likely to play in the future development of Irish graduates, particularly as proposals to develop specific internship programmes in stem subjects are being developed at national level.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to develop a framework of good practice for internships in conjunction with various stakeholders including, but not limited to:

The Department of Social Protection and the Higher Education Authority

### 11 ED 4 SUPPORT FUNDS FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS

#### REAPPROVED 2015

**Congress notes:**

That a number of support funds including the Fund for Student with Disabilities, the Maintenance Grant are only available for students studying on a full-time basis in recognised Higher Education Institutes.

**Congress further notes:**

That part-time students are not able to avail of the “free-fees” scheme.

**Congress mandates the Education Officer, Welfare Officer and Equality Officer:**

To campaign and lobby for support funds and the free fees scheme to be extended to include part-time students.

### 11 ED 18 MATHEMATICS BONUS POINTS

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress condemns:**

The decision by many higher education institutions in the past year to agree to a re-introduction of bonus points for higher level mathematics in the leaving certificate regardless of course of entry to higher education.

**Congress notes:**

The historical legacy of failure of the third-level sector in solving second-level problems by

imposing admissions requirements on second-level students without engaging in wide-ranging consultations on curriculum reform.

**Congress mandates the Education Officer:**

To prepare a policy document in accordance with this and previous national council motions on the subject and to lobby for the reversal of the decision to offer bonus points by the institutions concerned.

### 11 ED 20 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress recognises:**

That we as a student movement must strive for real equality and equal opportunities at all levels in the Irish education system.  We also recognise that whether or not a child will make it to third-level education is often determined many years before that child sits the Leaving Certificate.

**Congress further recognises:**

That many potential college students have not made it to third-level because they come from areas of socio-economic disadvantage, and thus cannot afford private schooling, or because the public schools in their areas are not adequate.

**Congress notes:**

The growth of grind schools and private secondary schools in Ireland in the past two decades, and that this growth of the private school sector has led to elitism among students at second-level and beyond, and has also resulted in many good public schools struggling to fill places and stay open.

**Congress further notes:**

That students attending private schools have access to an education that is partly publicly-funded, but which is only accessible to those who can afford it. This gives them a significant advantage over public school students in the CAO race for places in third-level courses.

**Congress mandates USI Officer Board:**

To campaign for the removing of state funding for private primary and secondary schools, and for any monies saved to be re-invested in the wider, publicly-funded and publicly-accessible education system including primary, secondary and third level education.

### 10 ED 4 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

#### REAPPROVED 2015

**Congress notes:**

That every year a substantial number of International Students travel to Ireland to study within our higher education system.

**Congress recognizes:**

That these International students can pay large sums of money, on average €12,000 per year to study in our 3rd level institutions.

Congress further recognizes**:**

That there have been a number of issues with regards to these students arriving in Ireland with regards to Irish Customs.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to work on behalf of the International students to put in place an International Student Charter detailing student rights and responsibilities in the third level CO’s where they are studying. By the development of the framework each IoT and University would become responsible for the treatment of International Students when travelling to Ireland.

### 10 ED 11 APPRENTICES

#### REAPPPROVED 2015 and 2018 (with amendments) – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress recognises:**

The need to provide further education opportunities in the face of the ever-changing employment landscape of Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and the Education Officer to lobby the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority to clearly state, in a national framework, the eligibility of qualified apprentices to progress into relevant degree courses.

### 10 ED 12 BUDGETS

#### REAPPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the current volatile economic climate, each Budget is likely to have significant impact on students.

**Congress further notes:**

That the fear and worry caused by budgets may cause avoidable harm to the welfare to Students.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The USI Education Officer, as soon as possible subsequent to the delivery each budget, to the write an explanatory memorandum of the impacts of the budget on student and communicate it to all CO’s.

### 09 ED 2 STUDENT LOANS/GRADUATE TAX

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the principle that education should be accessible to all people, has always been a core value of the student movement.

**Congress strongly believes:**

That education is a public and social good, which benefits not only the individual but the wider society. It should therefore be paid through progressive taxation like all public services. Investing in education is one of the most important investments we can make; not only does having an educated population strengthen our economy, but graduates pay on average 70% more in tax and have thus directly repaid the cost of their degree through taxation within ten years. Providing education to all citizens equally is fundamental principle for any fair society.

**Congress notes:**

The 2005 study in the UK by Professor Claire Callender and Jonathan Jackson that shows that for those on lower or middle income backgrounds in the UK, the fear of debt is a significant barrier to entry to third level education in the UK. This is a result of the student loans system in the UK.

**Congress also notes:**

The research by Professor Kathleen Lynch of UCD’s equality studies centre on the Australian HECS system that shows the detrimental impact that a deferred loans system can have on equity of access to third level and on increasing student impoverishment.

**Congress notes:**

That Australia’s education minister Julia Gillard has described the HECS student loans system as “at best complex and at worst anomalous, inconsistent and irrational”.

**Congress also notes:**

That the fairest and most egalitarian way of paying for higher education is through a progressive taxation system.

**Congress condemns:**

The suggestions by minister for education Batt O’Keeffe that an Australian-style student loans system might be introduced in Ireland, at the same time as the Australian government itself is recognising that the system doesn’t work.

**Congress also opposes:**

The suggestions by some politicians for a graduate tax. Graduates already pay 70% more in tax than non-graduates, therefore a graduation tax is not necessary nor is it fair.

**Congress mandates:**

USI officer board to continue to oppose fees in any guise, including student loans and a graduate taxation system.

**Congress calls for:**

Investment through progressive taxation in a fair, equitable education system from primary to third level, whereby those on higher incomes pay higher taxes which funds all essential services. This is an investment in strengthening our economy as well as creating fairness in our society.

### 09 ED 11 BOLOGNA PROCESS

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the bologna process has, since its inception in 1999, become one of the most important and dominant themes in further and higher education in Europe with significant reforms being introduced throughout Europe and here in Ireland as a result of the bologna process.

**Congress further notes:**

That the reforms introduced as part of the bologna process have seen a dramatic transformation in further and higher education, much of which has been positive.

**Congress recognises:**

That these reforms have, however, also introduced considerable uncertainty into further and higher education and there is a need to ensure that as part of the bologna process, the quality of education is not undermined.

**Congress welcomes:**

That the union of students in Ireland has been involved at both a national and European level in the formation and development of policy in the key areas of the bologna process.

**Congress regrets:**

That on an issue as critical as the bologna process, which is now entering second decade, USI does not have official, formalised policy on the bologna process.

**Congress believes:**

That it is imperative that the national students’ union develop policy on an issue that is having and will have a profound impact on its membership.

**Congress further mandates:**

USI to adopt the following principles on the Bologna process to be implemented by the president and the education officer

***Bologna process (general principles)***

USI welcomes the creation of the bologna process and the importance of education and educational co-operation in the development and strengthening of stable, peaceful and democratic societies.

The bologna process should be based on creating opportunities for mobility within higher education in Europe and should not be focused on purely developing a higher education system that suits the needs of enterprise and employers

USI strongly believes that the over-arching goal of the bologna process should be to create a student-centred learning environment that is flexible, transparent, accessible to all and encourages the development of lifelong learning.

Future development of the bologna process must be driven through consultation and cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, which must include student representatives.

The bologna process should aim for significant and continuous improvement in the standard of education provided to students and that students are full and complete partners within institutions and at sectoral, national and European levels. Education must also be transparent with embedded and appropriate QA mechanisms focused on improving standards and academic provision.

Social dimension.

Participation in further and higher education must be widened and the demographic of these sectors should reflect the diversity of the population of the signatory countries to the bologna process.

Further and higher education is a public good and should primarily be publicly funded.

USI is opposed to any and all attempts to privatise further and higher education.

USI strongly welcomes the commitment enshrined in the bologna process to student services and will work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that student services are adequately resourced and improved in line with the needs of students.

All obstacles to participation further and higher education should be removed and

USI will campaign strongly on this.

The social dimension of the bologna process must continue to be one of the central action lines of the bologna process.

**Mobility**

Increased opportunities for student and staff mobility as a result of the bologna process is to be welcomed and contributes positively to the academic and personal development of students.

There should be a mobility target of 20% of the student population by 2020. The participative equity within this 20% must be improved and institutions must create measures to ensure that credits gained during mobility are recognised on return.

A central mobility fund should be created and contributed to by EHEA countries and financed according to the principle of public financing.

USI believes that higher education institutions should provide extensive language tuition to students to encourage and promote mobility.

The USI education officer and the USI equality officer shall campaign and lobby for the simplification of visa and work permit rules and procedures to allow for greater mobility and to prevent mobile students being subject to undue stress, difficulties and discrimination.

**Qualifications frameworks and recognition**

USI supports the adoption and implementation of the ECTS credit system whereby each academic year is comprised of 60 ECTS with each module being in multiples of 5 ECTS (e.g. 5, 10, 15 etc.). An ECTS credit should represent 20 – 25 hrs of student input including, but not limited to, lectures, assignments, self-directed learning, study and practical classes and placements.

USI welcomes and supports the development of modularisation where a module represents a block of teaching and learning with a combination of linked modules constituting a programme.

Semesterisation, whereby the academic year is comprised of two equal length teaching terms, is welcomed by USI. However, there should not be a nationally standardised set of term dates.

USI welcomes the introduction of learning outcomes, defined as “learning outcomes are statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning”. All modules, subjects and programmes must be designed around learning outcomes which are regularly quality assessed to ensure they are appropriate and fir for purpose. Learning outcomes must be used to create a student-centred learning environment and may not be used to create a b0ox-ticking environment.

USI continues to support the national framework of qualifications and shall campaign to ensure that learning outcomes align with the knowledge, skills and competencies associated with the relevant level of the NFQ.

All qualifications in further and higher education should be comparable and readable so that a student’s qualifications can be mapped on to both the European qualifications framework and the qualifications framework of all countries in the bologna process with ease. The comparability should be verified for the student by the relevant authority (such as ENIC-NARIC) free of charge.

The USI education officer shall run a campaign, in conjunction with constituent organisations, to raise awareness of the NFQ and to ensure that no student is disadvantaged by its operation.

**USI Bologna Process Campaign**

USI reaffirms that the bologna process is of extreme importance to the education that students will receive.

USI shall undertake all necessary effort, under the direction of the USI education officer, to assist constituent organisations in ensuring the proper implementation of all bologna process related reforms.

USI will promote awareness of the bologna process and of related reforms and opportunities to students through constituent organisations.

USI will work with all relevant stakeholders sectorally, nationally and internationally to ensure adequate student representation and that the bologna process develops in lines with the above principles.

The USI education officer will develop and regularly update a USI strategy on the Bologna process.

### 09 ED 13 EQUITY OF ACCESS

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the introduction of the ‘free fees’ initiative was designed to widen access to further and higher education for those from traditionally under-represented backgrounds.

**Congress recognises:**

That while much progress has been made, with an overall participation rate of 55%, there are still a number of socio-economic and non-traditional backgrounds which do not participate in further and higher education at the level of other groups.

**Congress welcomes:**

Recent moves to broaden the participation rate, in particular the creation of the national office for the equity of access to higher education and the publication of the *national plan for equity of access to higher education 2008 – 2013.*

**Congress reaffirms:**

That one of the fundamental principles of the union is that it strives for an education and training system open to all, irrespective of any consideration, including consideration of national origin, ethnic background, age, ability, sex, sexuality, creed, political beliefs or economic circumstances, so that each individual can realise their full potential.

**Congress believes:**

That in order to uphold and defend this principle, USI must have a co-ordinated policy on equity of access and encouraging the widening of participation in further and higher education.

**Congress mandates:**

That USI adopts the following principles as its policy on equity of access to further and higher education to be implemented by officer board:

**Equity of Access (General Principles)**

* USI shall campaign for an education and training system open and accessible to all.
* All sectors of society should have equal opportunity to participate in further and higher education.
* Further and higher education institutions should take all steps necessary to encourage and broaden participation
* USI shall build links and work with all relevant stakeholders and organisations to widen the participation rate and address all obstacles that may prevent individuals from accessing further and higher education
* The USI education officer shall develop and regularly update a USI strategy for equity of access to further and higher education
* Targeted access funding and programmes must be expanded to ensure that all students who come from traditionally under-represented backgrounds are able to access further and higher education
* All cuts to the student assistance fund, access offices or strategic innovation funded access projects shall be vigorously opposed by USI
* All constituent organisations shall be supported by USI in promoting access within their own institution and in supporting the proper representation of access students through policy development, practice, promotion and partnership
* The USI education officer and the USI deputy president/campaigns officer shall develop a public campaign promoting access to further and higher education, highlighting the current obstacles and building momentum to have these issues addressed.

### 09 ED 15 QUALITY ASSURANCE

#### REAPPROVED 2015 (With Amendments) and 2018 (With no further amendments) – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That quality assurance is an increasingly important issue facing higher and further education and one which USI needs a strong, coordinated campaign on.

**Congress also notes:**

That USI currently has eight existing motions relating to the area of quality assurance, each with different mandates and emphases.

**Congress recognises:**

That while each motion covers an important topic, it has created a disparate and sometimes sectoral approach to quality assurance that prohibits the development of a coherent campaign that could affect real change.

**Congress also recognises:**

That as USI represents students across all sectors of further and higher education, it must establish a common set of principles that will underpin and inform the organisation’s approach to quality assurance

**Congress further mandates:**

That USI adopts the following guidelines as its policy on quality assurance to be implemented by the education officer:

***Aims and principles:***

‘Quality assurance’ includes processes such as evaluation, accreditation and audit.

Students have a right to a high quality of education and to have that education reviewed and assessed regularly

The interests of students as well as employers and wider society are served through good quality higher education

Institutional autonomy, tempered by a recognition that this brings with it heavy responsibilities

The need for external quality assurance to be fit for its purpose and to place only an appropriate and necessary burden on institutions for the achievement of its objectives

Centrality of student involvement and representation at all levels of the quality assurance process

QA mechanisms should result in demonstrative improvements and that these improvements should be communicated back to students

All elements of the QA process shall be transparent and accountable

***Quality Assurance of Modules, Programmes and Academic Units (General Principles)***

Institutions should have policy, procedures and formal mechanisms for the quality assurance of their programmes and awards

Institutions should have a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work

Each institution should have a central quality assurance office and/or committee that oversees the implementation of QA; this body shall have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have student representation

All panels formed to conduct a QA review should have expert external representation

The quality of teaching staff shall be periodically reviewed as part of any programme, academic unit or institutional review and shall be commented on in the final report

The quality of education provided should be the central element in a review and each module and programme shall be assessed as to whether it is meeting its stated learning outcomes

The appropriateness of the stated learning outcomes as they support a high quality education should also be reviewed

Any and all QA reviews should also examine the quality of resources to support student learning including information systems, library resources and any and all other relevant services

Modules should be assessed annually with programmes and academic units reviewed on a cyclical basis with programmes reviewed at least once every three years and academic units at least once every five years

All quality assurance evaluations (module, programme, academic unit) should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the recommendations should be produced and communicated to students

***External Quality Review of Institutions (General Principles)***

All institutions should be subject to review at least once every seven years

Panels should be chosen and overseen by the accreditation and/or awarding body

All panels should have student representation from a different institution with the pool of student representatives drawn up in consultation with USI

All panels formed to conduct an institutional review should have expert external representation

All panels should be fully independent and free of any influence or conflict of interest

Guidelines for institutional reviews should be drawn up by the accreditation agency based on standardised best practice, such as ENQA’s ‘standards and guidelines’

As part of the review process the institution should produce a self-assessment report which should include progress on the recommendations of the previous report

The effectiveness and suitability of the institution’s internal QA policies, procedures and mechanisms should be assessed

The review should also examine the overall quality of the student experience, learning resources, information systems, institutional culture (academic and professional) and academic structure

All institutional review reports should be made available online and all module and programme reviews be distributed to the students affected

Following each assessment an action plan and timeline to implement the recommendations should be produced and communicated to students and the institution

***Student Participation in Quality Assurance***

Student participation in quality assurance is essential in order to ensure that any QA system is credible

The institution seeks to enshrine the value of student participation in quality assurance activities at module, programme, departmental, faculty and institutional level.

Each institution should produce a guide for new students and should aim to produce a quality assurance handbook

Student representation on all QA fora is essential

The student representation system should be designed to afford opportunities for student engagement in decision-making and quality management arrangements

***USI Campaign on Quality Assurance***

USI will campaign to ensure high quality teaching and QA standards throughout the further and higher education sectors in accordance with the policies above

USI shall produce, or work with any sectoral body producing, a handbook for students on quality assurance detailing the rights of students and the importance of student involvement in QA

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in developing and implementing QA policies in accordance with the above principles

The USI education officer shall assist constituent organisations in designing and producing materials to inform students about QA procedures and their right to a high quality education.

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# WELFARE

## 18 EM 2 (WEL) : Fee Certainty

### Proposed by TCD Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

Non-EU and Postgraduate students pay significant fees annually for their education. There is no government regulation of fees for these students. Many of these students are multi-year students and precarious fee increases year to year has a negative impact on students.

#### Congress further notes:

Trinity College introduced a policy of ‘fee certainty’ for non-EU and Postgraduate students meaning new students will be be aware of the entire cost of their degree programme, prior to commencing their studies. This will provide fee paying multi-year students with vital information often required when applying for loans and scholarships, as well as placing students in an improved position to budget for the duration of their studies.

#### Congress mandates:

That until such a time as higher education is free to all students, congress mandates the VP for Academic Affairs and the VP for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for the introduction of fee certainty policies for multiyear fee paying students in HEIs meaning the costs associated with the entire duration of a degree programme is determined prior to the student beginning their studies.

## 18 EM 3 (WEL) : Survivor Support Campaigns

### Proposed by NUI Galway Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

Legislation, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, does not favour the victim and that there are very little provisions put in place to support survivors of sexual assault and rape.

#### Congress further notes:

Issues regarding consent, sexual assault and rape has been to the forefront of media attention as of late. This may have an impact on future victims coming forward to report an assault. The only way this can change is for legislation to be re-written and/or added to and an improvement of provisions to be put in place for victim support. This will in turn change Irish cultures and protect the victim from personal attack.

#### Congress believes:

That the student movement has always been one to inspire great change within society and incite progressive legislation. We should unite once again to demand a change and to demand better victim support for future crimes reported.

#### Congress mandates:

The Vice-President for Welfare and the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to head up survivor support campaigns. This would unite MO’s across Ireland to come together and lead a movement towards a better legal and support system.

#### Congress further mandates:

That these campaigns, lead by USI, would promote local support groups in regional areas for victims of sexual assault. Congress also mandates that these campaigns be run within the first semester of the academic term to provide the best most efficient support to students.

## NC18 WEL 1 : ASRA

### Proposed by the USI VP Welfare

#### Council​ ​Notes

The many issues facing students when looking for student accommodation which is of an

acceptable standard.

#### Council​ ​Notes​ ​with​ ​Concern

The escalating number of cramped and substandard accommodation that students are living in posing a number of health and safety risks to students across the island.

#### Council​ ​Also​ ​Notes

That ASRA, the Association for Student Residential Accommodation, is the leading representative organisation for student accommodation professionals throughout the UK and Ireland. ASRA represents student accommodation providers on a range of statutory boards and in various housing related organisations.

#### Council​ ​Mandates

The VP Welfare to work with ASRA to collectively in order to promote good standards in accommodation provision.

#### Council​ ​Also​ ​Mandates

The VP Welfare to seek a place on their committee/boards with the aim of having a continuous student voice within the organisation.

NC 18 WEL 3: One for Ireland

### Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

#### Council Believes:

That youth mental health and homelessness are pressing social issues in Ireland today.

#### Council Recognises:

The annual fundraising weekend (March 30 - April 2, 2018) organised by charity One for Ireland, which comprises of a nationwide network of volunteers and businesses seeking to raise funds for charities in the youth mental health and homelessness sectors.

#### Council Notes:

The innovative cash-free fundraising model pioneered by One For Ireland.

#### Council Further Notes:

That the aims of One For Ireland are very closely aligned, and that USI can be of significant assistance to One For Ireland in their fundraising effort.

#### Council therefore mandates:

USI’s Regional Officers to support the work of One For Ireland in advance of their fundraising effort.

#### Council Further Mandates:

USI to support One For Ireland with promotion in advance of their fundraising effort.

## 2018 WEL 1 : Counselling and Mental Health Support for Students’ Union Officers.

### Proposed by LIT Students’ Union - Welfare

#### Congress recognizes:

The toll a year in Students’ Union can take on the mental health of a sabbatical officer and the negative impact this can have on their working ability and their personal lives.

#### Congress also recognizes:

Sabbatical Officers quite likely experience Vicarious Trauma, due to the nature of their work.

#### Congress notes:

Currently if a sabbatical officer wants to seek counselling, this service can only be availed through on campus services or seeking it externally. This can prove to be costly when it is externally sourced and in many cases it is not appropriate for an SU Officer to avail of services internally as it may negatively impact on working relations within Institutes and Universities.

#### Congress also notes:

Most Aid organisation/NGOs/ support organisations have a form of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or Supervision in place; which exists to alleviate Vicarious Trauma or any personal difficulties faced due to the nature of the work, and that officers could greatly benefit from a similar set up.

#### Congress further notes:

The success of video doc and that a similar service could work for counselling. The possibility of counselling being offered online would also help to facilitate officers who are seeking support but may struggle in terms of finding time to attend sessions.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to explore the possibility of providing free counselling services and mental health support to all USI and SU officers throughout their term with an additional number of de-brief sessions to follow on from the end of an officer’s term.

## 2018 WEL 2 : Online Student Assistance Fund

### Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

The Student Assistance Fund is distributed through different application processes across HEIs.

While some have the resources to accept applications online, many do not. This can cause a drain on resources dealing with applications for both institute staff and SU officers, and ultimately prolongs the amount of time it takes to provide students in financial need with support.

#### Congress recognises:

An offline application process can exclude some access students and students studying abroad from accessing the SAF.   
Congress further notes:

SUSI's upcoming move to an online application process in the interest of a more accessible system for students.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice-President for Welfare to lobby the HEA to move towards providing an online system for SAF applications to institutions should they wish to adopt it.

## 2018 WEL 3 : Cap on Student Accommodation Prices on USI platforms

### Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

That there is a national housing crisis and student accommodation shortage.

#### Congress applauds:

That USI have launched homes.usi.ie and are a part of the national Housing Coalition.

#### Congress proposes:

Alongside the excellent work that USI does at the moment regarding accommodation, they need to also set a precedent for the housing and economic conditions that they envision.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

USI impose a cap on the price of the accommodation that they will platform.

#### Congress further notes:

That the price of accommodation fluctuates depending on the economy, and so this proposed cap will also fluctuate.   
The amount can be amended accordingly by the VP Welfare each year in accordance to rental prices.

## 2018 WEL 4 : Drug awareness and harm reduction campaign

### Proposed by IT Carlow Students’ Union

#### Congress recognises

The importance of running an engaging national campaign on drugs awareness and harm reduction.

#### Congress notes

Some of the material used to bring awareness to this topic is not very engaging for students in third level education.

#### Congress mandates

The VP Welfare to work with Sesh Safety, The Loop and other relevant organisations to develop and run a drugs awareness and harm reduction national campaign by the end of the first semester.

#### Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to provide training and guidance for member organisations on how to develop suitable policies within their Higher Education Institution on drug awareness and harm reduction models.

#### Congress therefore repeals:

16 WEL 12

## 2018 WEL 5 : Crisis Counselling Access

### Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

The importance of young people to seek help from mental health services, despite the difficulty in accessing them due to unacceptable wait times.

#### Congress further notes:

Short term free public crisis counselling services are inaccessible to those who are currently in the care of the HSE and awaiting appointments that are potentially months away.

#### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to provide a list of mental health organisations that mental health professionals and case workers can refer people to when wait times are too long.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the HSE to negotiate with short term counselling services to accept patients currently under the care of the HSE for counselling.

## 2018 WEL 6 : Timetabled Wellness Hours

### Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students’ Union

### REFERRED AND PASSED IN PARTS AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. INTERIM POLICY, TO COME TO CONGRESS 2019.

#### Congress notes:

The success of wellness hours in certain MO’s of USI in educating students in regards to a holistic lifestyle and also giving space and potential for personal development whilst in an extremely academic driven Institution.

#### Congress further notes:

The USI Mental Health Survey will give a rounded view of what ways students are struggling in regards to their mental health and thus this information could be used to see in what regard Wellness Hours could be targeted to address these issues.

#### Congress mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to develop a proposal document based on the USI Mental Health survey outlining the benefits of timetabled Wellness Hours on students from a holistic lifestyle approach with a focus on student retention, mental health and wellbeing. This document would be intended to be used by MO’s in a hope to establish scheduled wellness hours in their Institute.

## 2018 WEL 8 : Regional Food Banks

### Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

Food banks acquire donations of edible but unmarketable food from the food industry. Food can be donated due to a wide variety of reasons; they may be mislabelled, overproduced, test -market items and products with short code dates or even sometimes at the end of the day canteens in colleges throw away food that is perfect for consumption.

#### Congress further notes

Students who are struggling financially could be able to get some food from a food bank at the end of the day.

#### Congress mandates

Regional Officers to assist local MO’s in setting up food banks for students in financial hardship, with their college canteens or other external sources.

## 2018 WEL 9 : Student Assistance Fund Access

### Proposed by Institute of Technology Tralee Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

The essential assistance the SAF (Student Assistance Fund) provides to students.

#### Congress further notes

According to the SAF Guidelines “students participating on a second qualification at the same or a lower level are not eligible for funding.”

#### Congress notes with concern

The barriers to accessing the SAF for these students could be detrimental to continuing their studies.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare to work with the HEA to seek inclusion for these students so they may be eligible to apply for the SAF

## 2018 WEL 10 : Engagement with Irish Student Health Association (ISHA) members

### Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

That the health and wellbeing of the members of each MO is of great importance to USI.

#### Congress further notes

Student health services are very important part of HEI’s throughout country by caring for and engage with many students on a daily basis.

#### Congress Believes

That engaging with member organisations of the Irish Student Health Association is very beneficial to ensure that health and wellbeing campaigns run by USI are fully exposed to students and one clear consistent message is communicated throughout the country.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to communicate all relevant health & wellbeing campaigns in advance with ISHA and member organisations of ISHA

## 2018 WEL 11 : Smoking Cessation Campaign

### Proposed by: Institute of Technology, Sligo Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

USI,HSE & DRUGS.IE have run campaigns on the dangers of drug use, but have neglected to highlight the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes and how addictive they are.

#### Congress Believes

That educating students about the dangers of smoking regular tobacco cigarettes and electronic cigarettes may lead to a decrease in use.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to carry out comprehensive national campaigns on smoking cessation and the dangers of smoking.

## 2018 WEL 12 : Abusive Relationships, Sexual Violence & Harassment

### Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

#### Congress Notes

The suffering that is caused by the many levels of abusive relationships, sexual violence and harassment.

#### Congress Recognises

That several national organisations are doing work in the area of domestic violence, sexual harassment, violence, and emotional abuse, and the USI should build partnerships with them in order to ensure students are part of their target audiences moving forward.

#### Congress Mandates

The VP Welfare to roll out a national information campaign that is inclusive of all genders and none around abusive relationships, dating abuse, sexual violence and harassment in a similar fashion to the the “Too into You” campaign.

#### Congress Also Mandates

The VP Welfare & VP Campaigns to create a toolkit for MO’s on sexual harassment to be disseminated alongside an awareness campaign.

#### Congress Further Mandates

The VP Welfare and VP Equality & Citizenship to develop a partnership with the National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

#### Congress therefore deletes

17 EQ 4 - Expansion of “2in2u” Campaign.

## 2018 WEL 13 : Health Promotion Strategy

### Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

#### Congress Notes

The Health Promotion Strategy that was adopted by USI Congress 2016.

#### Congress Commends

The work undertaken by Officerboard at that time in relation to this strategy.

#### Congress Mandates

The adoption and implementation of the updated Health Promotion Strategy 2018-2021.

## 2018 WEL 14 : Cura Disassociation

### Proposed by the Vice President for Welfare

### REFERRED AND PASSED AT NATIONAL COUNCIL. INTERIM POLICY, TO COME TO CONGRESS 2019.

### Congress Notes

The support that pregnant people may need during a crisis pregnancy is non-judgemental, unbiased and factual.

#### Congress Notes

Cura does not provide contact details for abortion clinics, or information on abortion services.

#### Congress Notes with Concern

That Cura only provides two options during pregnancy counselling which can cause unnecessary pressure and lack of knowledge to make an informed choice.

#### Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Welfare to ensure that all information disseminated from USI is from organisations that provide all options to those seeking counsel on information relating to pregnancy.

#### Congress also Mandates

USI and the Vice President for Welfare to officially dissociate from Cura by ensuring information from them is not disseminated in any USI materials or campaigns relating to Cura.

## 2018 WEL 15 : Cyberbullying Policy

### Proposed by Welfare Working Group

#### Congress Notes

The adoption of the USI Cyberbullying Policy which was adopted at congress 2017.

#### Congress also Notes

How quickly issues change in the cyber community and how USI policy must be kept up to date to reflect that.

#### Congress Mandates

For the adoption of a new updated Cyber Bullying policy which will be reviewed every 12 months.

#### Congress also mandates

The deletion of the older version of the cyberbullying policy.

## 2018 WEL 16 : Expert Consent Advisory Group

### Proposed by Welfare Working Group

#### Congress Notes

Existing USI policy on Train the Trainer consent workshops to be rolled out by USI.

#### Congress Notes with concern

The severity of issues surrounding consent that students across the island of Ireland face on a daily basis.

#### Congress also Notes

The work undertaken by other organisations on consent and the level of expertise and experience they hold in this area.

#### Congress Mandates

The VP Welfare to organise an expert advisory group to advise on the roll out of Train the Trainer consent classes.

## 2018 WEL 17 : Financial Supports for FE Students

### Proposed by Welfare Working Group

#### Congress Notes

That many students in Further Education suffer financial worries

#### Congress also Notes

The lack of supports available to students in FE institutions which can cause a lot of extra pressures.

#### Congress notes with concern

Students in FE institutions may be disadvantaged because of lack of financial supports such as ESF and the disability fund.

#### Students also Notes with concern

That it can create a barrier to students you may want to progress to Higher Education, further studies or training.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP Welfare to lobby the Department of Education and  to extend financial supports to FE Students.

### 17 WEL EM 3 Proposed Qmark for good employment practices in the hospitality sector

###### Congress Regrets

That there is a significant number of students who are working in the hospitality sector who have been subjected to mistreatment and abuse of their basic employment rights. This has left students feeling devalued and demoralised. Research evidence shows that this experience is not confined to student workers alone. Research evidence also shows that people are afraid to speak up.

##### Congress Notes

That a large proportion of students who work part-time are employed in the Hospitality Sector. A survey Conducted by NUI Galway SU shows that 40% of respondents work in this sector.

##### Congress Further Notes

That a wider campaign has been launched after a public meeting on March 6 th by two ex-workers from the sector. They are hoping to promote a national Quality Mark for employers within the sector that treat employees fairly and uphold their basic rights. This could help combat the negative culture that has developed in the sector . They are planning to pilot the initiative in Galway City and move forward to other Tourist/ Student orientated towns and cities.

##### Congress Further Notes

That good employers should be recognised and promoted, especially if it is an SME that promotes good work place relations between employers and employees

##### Congress Welcomes

The Involvement of its affiliates such as 3rd level academics, SIPTU, and NGO’s such as the Migrant Rights Centre of Ireland, who are working closely with campaigners behind this important project.

##### Congress Believes

That the V.P for Campaigns, V.P for Welfare and V.P for Equality and Citizenship should work together to come up with a plan to help support this Initiative.

##### Congress Mandates

That the USI should lend its support for this QMark initiative to put in place mechanisms to help students who have faced difficulties in the workplace as a result of mistreatment from employers in the Hospitality Sector.

### 17 WEL 1 Age Threshold for Cervical Cancer Checks

##### Congress Notes

The Cervical Check Ireland provides free Smear tests to women over 25 years of age.

##### Congress Notes With Concern:

The lack of services available to students under the age of 25 with concerns and the time it takes to get appropriate treatment.

##### Congress Therefore Mandates:

The VP Welfare to lobby the appropriate bodies to campaign on lowering the initial age of smear screenings.

##### Congress Also Mandates:

The VP Welfare to provide un-biased information on the HPV Vaccine and its availability.

##### Congress Therefore Repeals:

10 17 WEL 6      CERVICAL CANCER

### 17 WEL 3 Dealing with students in distress

##### Congress Notes:

Student’s mental health issues are prevalent from the beginning of a Sabbatical officer’s term

##### Congress Believes:

Although basic Mental Health Training is offered at SUT, Sabbatical Officers need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to assist students during times of distress from the start of the welfare officers elected term.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Welfare to organise comprehensive and practical training at SUT to ensure Sabbatical Officers are capable of dealing with students in distress from the early stages of the officer's term.

##### Congress Repeals:

16 WEL 19

### 17 WEL 7 Rental Restrictions for HEI Owned Campus Accommodations’

##### Congress notes

the impact the housing and rental crises is having on students participating in higher education.

##### Congress further notes

that a number of HEI’s own and operate on-campus accommodation services for their respective students, through companies established and owned by the HEI’s.

##### Congress further notes

that student renters using these accommodation services have not benefited from rental restriction measures introduced between 2014-2016 under varying amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act 2016, mainly due to the type of rental agreements these services utilise.

##### Congress believes that

it is important that such accommodation is accessible for all types of students participating in higher education and that HEI’s should not be allowed use the rental crises to plunder the pockets of student renters.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The USI President to seek the HEA to issue guidelines to see that similar rental restriction measures are introduced for HEI owned student accommodation.

### 17 WEL 8 Consent classes Congress notes:

The importance of educating our members around sexual health particularly around consent.

##### Congress further notes:

That USI has worked closely with organisations like DRCC, Smart Consent and ICOS in raising awareness around consent, domestic violence and sexual assault through campaigns, training and lobbying efforts.

##### Congress applauds:

The work that USI has done in relation to the above in pioneering and spearheading national campaigns and the dialogue around consent and sexual health.

##### Congress believes:

That USI should assist local Officers in creating policies locally in their Institutions to implement consent workshops in order to educate their members and continue the dialogue surrounding consent.

##### Congress mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and VP for Welfare to conduct research and design, with the assistance of external expert bodies, a national student-focused consent workshop based on recommendations from the 2016 Trinity consent workshops.

##### Congress further mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and VP for Welfare carry out ‘train the trainer’ consent courses for Officers in order to educate them on implementing inclusive consent courses for their students.

### 17 WEL 9 Gambling Control Bill 2013

##### Congress notes:

That USI has a stance to campaign to educate its members on the prevalence of problem gambling for students.

##### Congress also notes:

That Ireland has one of the loosest regulations on gambling in Europe while the Gambling Control Bill 2013 hasn’t been acted on since it was first drafted.

##### Congress believes:

That with increase awareness of gambling and improvements in technology, that this bill must be passed to ensure that students and future generations are protected from gambling addiction.

##### Congress Mandates:

That the VP Welfare work with organisations such as Problem Gambling Ireland & the Rutland Centre to lobby the Minister for Justice, relevant Junior Ministers and Oireachtas members on introducing the Gambling Control Bill.

### 17 WEL 10 Training for Officers dealing with students with mental illness or disability

##### Congress Notes:

That MOS should be trained in basic awareness in how to deal with difficult situation if they arose and how to refer them on and how to refer the students to the proper services

##### Congress Believe:

That MOS are not equipped with the basic skill on how to deal and refer people who might have a mental illness, a Disability or a medical condition.

##### Congress Further Believes:

That if MOS are equipped with the basic skill it will help the student receive help from the right services as quick as possible.

##### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to organise training for MOs in the basic skills for dealing with a student with a mental illness, a Disability or a Medical Condition if a difficult situation arose and which are the proper services to which to refer students.

### 17 WEL 11 Accommodation Strategy

##### Congress Notes:

That the accommodation strategy was passed in Congress 2016.

##### Congress also Notes:

That the accommodation strategy must be edited due to legislative changes.

##### Congress Mandates:

The adoption of the USI accommodation strategy with the included edits.

### 17 WEL 12 Public Health ( Alcohol ) Bill

##### Congress notes:

That USI officially dis-assiocated from Drinkaware.ie in November 2013

##### Congress also notes:

That the Public Health (Alcohol) Bill is currently being discussed in the Dáil and is currently being lobbied against by the drinks industry which is successfully stalling the introduction of the Bill in full.

##### Congress Believes:

That the Public Health ( Alcohol ) Bill must be introduced in its current full form to protect future generations and save lives.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI President with assistance of the VP Welfare to lobby the government to support and  introduce the bill.

### 17 WEL 13 USI Health Promoting Strategy:

##### Congress notes:

11/17 WEL 4 mandating the creation of a strategy document in the main areas of work for the VP Welfare.

##### Congress applauds:

The creation of the USI Health Promoting Strategy which encompasses the following strategies:

·      Mental Health Strategy

·      Sexual Health Strategy

·      Physical Health Strategy

·      Healthy Eating Strategy

·      Body Confidence Strategy

·      Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy

·      Drugs Harm Reduction Strategy

·      Smoking Cessation Strategy

·      Gambling Awareness Strategy

##### Congress recognises:

The importance of having a streamlined strategy

##### Congress therefore incorporates the following motions into the Strategy, which has been published accordingly:

Health:

16/wel 14

16/wel 13

16/wel 12

16 wel11

16 wel 1

·      15/Wel 13

·      14/wel 4

·      14/wel 5

·      14/wel 6

·      14/wel 8

·      14/wel 16

·      13/wel 1

·      13/wel 2

·      12/wel 7

·      13/wel 11

·      13/wel 13

·      12/wel 7

·      11/wel 5

Sexual Health:

·      15/wel 9

·      14/wel 11

·      13/wel 3

·      12/wel 3

·      11/wel6

·      11/wel 7

·      10/wel 7

·      9/wel 1

·      9/wel 9

##### Congress mandates

The VP Welfare to follow the above-created USI Health Promoting Strategy with a review every 3 years.

### 17 WEL14 Cervical Cancer Awareness

##### Congress Notes:

Cervical Cancer is sadly statistically increasing amongst the younger population of women in Ireland.

##### Congress Further Notes:

Cervical Check – Irelands National Cervical Screening Programme currently provides free smear tests to women aged between 25-60 years of age.

##### Congress Believes:

Although free smear tests are provided for all women over the age of 25, women under this age may also develop Cervical Cancer.

##### Congress Notes With Concern:

That women who are under 25 years of age, and who are sexually active (which gives them an increased risk of contracting cervical cancer), and who may have symptoms or desire a smear test, currently must pay for it.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI VP Welfare, to work with the HSE to develop an awareness campaign on cervical cancer including the symptoms, risks and how and where to get tests.

##### Congress Also Mandates:

The VP Welfare to lobby the government to lower the age of the first FREE Smear test in order to detect the early stages of cervical cancer.

### 17 WEL 15 Student Survey on Perceptions of Consent

##### Congress notes

that a ‘Say Something’ Survey was carried out in 2013, to research the instances of unwanted sexual contact and levels of reporting, but not the perception and culture of consent and sexual misconduct.

##### Congress also notes

that in the last 3+ years since the survey was carried out, the topic of consent and sexual misconduct within Educational institutions has become a larger topic of conversation for more institutions than ever.

##### Congress believes

that to truly tackle the issue of sexual misconduct, culture and social norms must be changed.

##### Congress believes

that this survey, if repeated at a later date, will allow USI, MO’s and the wider community to evaluate campaigns, policies and strategies that they may have implemented and evaluate whether these have worked in changing social perceptions and norms.

##### Congress believes

that this research will better shape campaigns on the topic of consent and allow for MO’s to lobby institutions (if required) on the Implementation of consent classes, policies and strategies.

##### Congress mandates

the VP Welfare and the VP Equality and Citizenship to investigate the feasibility of such a survey.

### 17 WEL 16 Student Assistant Fund & SUSI Recipients

##### Congress notes:

The purpose of the Student Assistance Fund is to provide support to fulltime students who may be experiencing extreme financial difficulties, have experienced a major change of circumstances or are experiencing extreme personal hardship

##### Congress further notes:

In some third level institutions in Ireland the Student Assistance Fund application process is closed to those who are in receipt of SUSI.

##### Congress mandates:

VP Equality & Citizenship to work towards the Student Assistance Fund being accessible to all students regardless of whether they are in receipt of SUSI or not across Institutes in Ireland.

### 17 WEL 17 Key Welfare Campaigns Directory

##### Congress Notes

The previous campaign directories designed and distributed by previous officers to aid MO’s in planning key Welfare Campaigns throughout the year.

##### Congress also Notes

The time and coordination it takes to organise campaigns which can sometimes be daunting if they are new to their role.

##### Congress Applauds

The work done previously by welfare officers in this area.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare and VP Campaigns to collate a campaign directory to be distributed to welfare officers with poster and event ideas in the style of previous years.

##### This is to be completed for the 2nd national council of the SU year

### 17 WEL 18 PrEP Availability in Ireland

##### Congress Notes:

Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is an important tool in reducing the rate of HIV infections and that PrEP is not currently available in Ireland. PrEP, is a safe and highly effective way for HIV-negative people to prevent HIV.

##### Congress also notes:

PrEP is recommended as a prevention option for people at substantial risk of HIV by the World Health Organization, the US Centers for Disease Control and UNAIDS.

##### Congress further notes:

HIV diagnoses are increasing in Ireland, but PrEP offers a way to prevent new transmissions. Condoms have been our main HIV prevention method for 30 years. While they have been very successful, they have not been enough to stop HIV alone. In 2016 the number of new HIV diagnoses in Ireland was the highest ever recorded. New options like PrEP won’t replace condoms and other risk-reduction approaches, but will be additional tools to help meet the wide range of needs in the real world.

##### Congress mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship campaign for the accessible introduction of PrEP in Ireland, and work with advocacy organisations already working in the area, eg. *ACT UP* Dublin.

##### Congress also mandates:

The VP Welfare to lobby the HSE and to seek availability of PrEP in Ireland as part of the National Sexual Health Strategy moving forward.

### 17 WEL 20 Road Safety

##### Congress Notes

Previous collaborations with the Road Safety Authority to create awareness of safe driving on our roads.

##### Congress Notes with Concern

the rate of fatal accidents among young drivers, and the dangers of driving witnessed in the Southern Region.

##### Congress Also Notes

The importance of raising awareness of road safety to students of which many rely on to get to and from college.

##### Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP Welfare to look into collaborating with organisations such as the Road Safety Authority in promoting Road Safety to students.

### 17 WEL 21 Student Bereavement Support

##### Congress Notes

As a result of the autonomous nature of policy making each HEI will have a different approach with how to deal with bereavement.

##### Congress  therefore Observes

The creation of bereavement policies within each HEI.

##### Congress Welcomes

The structure that they provide on how each institute handles the death of a student or the death of a student’s guardian/friend.

##### Congress Notes

That the Students’ Union is often a source of comfort, familiarity and support to students who have suffered a bereavement.

##### Congress Believes

It would be beneficial for all MOs to have a bereavement policy to assist the Students’ Union with a bereavement of a student or a student’s next-of-kin.

##### Congress therefore Mandates

The VP for Welfare to find out the best practice of MOs regarding their individual bereavement policies and come up with a uniformed policy for MOs to use in the case of a bereavement.

##### Congress also Mandates

The VP for Welfare to also provide self care information for officers who have to deal with bereavement within their line of work.

##### Congress therefore Repeals

14 Wel 8 to be replaced by Student Bereavement Supports.

### 17 WEL 22 Social Inclusion Campaign

##### Congress notes:

Isolation and loneliness are two issues that affect many students across all institutions in Ireland.

##### Congress acknowledges:

AITSU ‘Mind Your Mates’ campaign and WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS’ UNION ‘Be Their Buddy’ campaign as being a successful social inclusion initiative in their campuses respectively.

##### Congress mandates:

VP Welfare to run a social inclusion campaign where students are encouraged to support each other at the most basic level of interaction.

Within this campaign, information on appropriate referral services is to be included so students are aware of pathways if an issue is disclosed.

### 17 WEL 24 Additional Opportunities Available to Post Second Level

Congress notes  
The pressure placed on Second Level students to gain entry into University and Institutes of Technology.

Congress further notes  
The level of drop-out rates amongst first year students at Third Level.

Congress believes  
A lack of career guidance and pressure to have to achieve Third Level contribute to these drop-out rates.

Congress mandates   
The Vice President for Campaigns to liaise with the Second Level Students’ Unions and relevant bodies to run a campaign to emphasize the valuable opportunities available from postponing Third Level education, by means of sampling the world these institutes try to prepare people for.

### 17 WEL 25 Personal Safety Campaign during Freshers’ Week

##### Congress notes:

Every September vast amount of students enter college for the first time, and find it difficult to transition from secondary to third level educational life.

##### Congress further notes:

That many students travel or move to bigger counties/cities and are not familiar with the surroundings of their new college.

##### Congress notes with concern:

Students are most vulnerable during freshers week, as they are exposed to new independence and environments, such as nightlife etc.

##### Congress notes with great concern:

That there is a lack of active promotion around personal safety for students.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

USI Welfare Officer, to research and develop a personal safety campaign, during freshers’ weeks’, that can be implemented into all universities and IOT’s across the country.

17 WEL 26 Drug Testing Kits: Awareness and Promotion  
Congress notes:  
Many third level students partake in recreational drug use.   
Congress further notes:  
That students are not exposed to the necessary information or tools/apparatus needed to make informed choices about drug usage.   
Congress notes with concern:   
That lack of information/ apparatus around drug safety and fear mongering with students is resulting in misinformation and putting students at risk. This is why the promotion and education of drug testing kits is beneficial to all students across the country  
Congress mandates:   
VP Welfare, to circulate information around drug testing kits and look into the feasibility of selling them or making them available via the students union.

### 17 WEL 27 Stim Room for ASD students

##### Congress notes:

That some students find it hard to concentrate and integrate into the student body during lectures and exams due to environmental sensitivity, such as florescent lighting, overcrowding, heat temperature and distracting sounds.

##### Congress further notes:

That students internationally with conditions such as ASD (autism spectrum disorder) have benefited from stim rooms, which is a low cost resource that can be easily implemented into universities and institutes across the country.

##### Congress mandates:

VP Equality & Citizenship to investigate the feasibility of implementing this across all colleges in the country.

## 16 WEL 1 Drug Testing Kits

#### Congress notes

The prevalence of a recreational drugs culture in Third Level Institutes in Ireland, and the deaths of young people as a result of drug abuse.

#### Congress also notes

The *status quo* of the ‘Just Say No’ approach to the use of recreational drugs is ineffective, and a radical change in recreational drug education is required.

#### Congress recognises

Policies in other jurisdictions have adopted a damage-limitation approach to recreational drug taking, such as the introduction of pill-testing stations, where one may have tablets checked for purity.

#### Congress also recognises

That taking recreational drugs is a highly reckless and dangerous activity, that drug testing does not clarify a drugs potency or the presence of impurities, and that the safest action to take is to never take drugs.

#### Congress mandates

The VP Welfare to facilitate a feasibility study into the effects, and implications of Drug Testing Kits being introduced in Third Level colleges.

## 16 WEL 3 USI Financial Representation Policy

#### Congress Repeals

Motions 15 WE 24, 15 AAQA 3, and 14 UO 5.

#### Congress Adopts

The proposed USI Financial Representation Policy

## 16 WEL 4 Support for student teachers in primary education

#### Congress notes

The work placements undertaken by student teachers pursuing a degree in primary education.

#### Congress believes

That these placements are invaluable in preparing student teachers pursuing a career in this sector and that these placements last in effect the full work day in some instances.

#### Congress therefore mandates

Officer Board to investigate the possibility of these students being provided with a level of support, subsidy or stipend for their placement work.

## 16 WEL 6 USI Student Accommodation Strategy:

#### Congress notes:

The difficulty in recent years that students face in obtaining accommodation and that for many students, having affordable and fit-for-purpose accommodation is a prerequisite for attending college. There is also a need to increase student awareness of their rights and responsibilities as tenants.

#### Congress applauds:

The effective lobbying by USI for the governent to introduce a Deposit Retention Scheme and a further increase on the tax exemption for the Rent A Room Relief Scheme.

#### Congress adopts:

The USI Student Accommodation Strategy.

#### Congress therefore deletes:

* 15/wel 1 Accommodation Strategy
* 15/wel 5 Rent a Room Relief Scheme
* 15/wel 8 Student Housing Association
* 15/wel 11 Full Implementation of Deposit Protection Scheme
* 15/wel Rent Controls
* 15/wel 22 Emergency Accommodation
* 15/wel 23 Liaison with Student Acconpmmodation Staff
* 13/wel 10 International Students Tenancy Disputes
* 12/wel 2 Student Accommodation
* 11/wel 8 Student Accommodation Survey
* 14/NA 6 Accommodation Standards & Availability
* 14 NA 9 Tenants’ Rights
* 12 NA 10 National Property Services Regulatory Authority
* 13 EM 1 Property Tax Exemption

#### Congress mandate The President and VP Welfare:

To follow the USI Student Accommodation Strategy and provide support and training to local officers to assist them in following through on it’s reccommendations. The strategy shall be disseminated at the beginning of the year and officers shall endeavour to review the strategy every 3 years.

## 16 WEL 8 Organ Donor Cards

#### Congress Notes:

Organ donor cards are free but not widely available. Many students would be happy to donate their organs after death but do not have a card due to poor accessibility.

#### Congress Further Notes:

Many people die while waiting for organ transplants every day. By agreeing to donate organs, a tragic death can save up to five lives and provide consolation for the person’s loved ones. Between 200 and 250 lives were saved in Ireland by organ donations and if the number of people willing to donate organs rises, many more lives can be saved or improved.

#### Congress therefore Mandates:

The Vice President Welfare to run a mini informative poster campaign informing students about the benefits of organ donation and where to get Organ Donor Cards.

#### Congress further Mandates:

That the Vice President Welfare liaises with the Organ Donor’s Association and distributes organ donation cards to all SU offices by the end of April.

That during inductions for first years and incoming students, beginning in September 2016, that they receive an organ donor card in their welcome pack.

## 16 WEL 11 Health Promotion Week

#### Congress Notes

That there is an increase in the number of health conditions affecting students while in College including cancers, viral infections/diseases, ongoing long term illnesses and conditions related to unhealthy eating/social habits.

#### Congress Further Notes:

The healthy living campaigns and mental health campaigns, and acknowledges these campaigns as being beneficial to students.

#### Congress Believes:

That the increase of ailments like cancers, viral infections, ongoing long term illnesses and conditions should be addressed as a concern and that information should be disseminated to members to benefit and engage students .

#### Congress Mandates:

The VP Campaigns and VP Welfare to work on the Healthy Living Campaign to address the aforementioned issues in relation to health which have increased within the Third Level  student demographic.

## 16 WEL 13 Gambling Awareness Campaign & Protocol

#### Congress affirms

Motion 15 WE 25 Gambling, which mandates the VP Welfare to “work with the relevant organisations to develop a campaign to inform students of the effects of gambling and recognising an addiction.”

#### Congress regrets

That, despite growing students’ union attentiveness to student gambling addiction, there is a lack of established protocol for students’ union officers for casework related to gambling addiction.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare to liaise with the relevant organisations to develop a protocol for students’ union officers to deploy in casework relating to gambling issues.

## 16 WEL 15 Migration free fees residency criterion

#### Congress notes

That between 2008 and 2014 Ireland had an estimated total net migration rate of 141,000 and that within this figure almost 70,000 falls within the 18-24 age bracket.

#### Congress believes

It is the shame of successive governments, in particular the governments in office between 2007 and 2015, that ambivalence towards mass emigration has made it in effect a political tool to offset unemployment.

#### Congress notes

The free fees scheme contains a residency criterion that an applicant must be resident in an EEA state for three of the five years prior to starting a course, in order to be eligible.

#### Congress believes

That this criterion creates a disincentive for migrant families wanting to return to Ireland by imposing an excessive financial burden to their access to higher level education in Ireland.

#### Congress therefore

Mandates as policy that USI is in favour of the abolishment of this criterion under this circumstance.

#### Congress mandates

USI Officer Board, in particular the VP AAQA and VP Equality & Citizenship, to campaign for the abolishment of the criterion and to report back to National Council bi-annually on the progress of this campaign.

## 16 WEL 17 Student Status and Department of Social Protection

#### Congress Notes

That the social protection system at present is undergoing extensive changes which are having many impacts of those within the system. Furthermore, Congress identifies that a lack of training, or awareness is evident around students who present themselves to the Department of Social Protection with a recent case in UCC highlights that one Community Welfare Officer stated “oh you’re a student what do I do with you?” propagating the argument that CWOs are unaware of student circumstances and schemes where a “student tag” may be applied, as this is only subject to certain schemes.

#### Congress Further Notes,

A case in UCC where a mature student took a deferral on medical basis and due to a erroneous decision by the CWO was not best suited to have dealt with the issue. Due to the error the student in question was forced to decide on whether to keep a roof over their family’s as the were not eligible to maintain a secondary payment of rent alliance on illness benefit after they returned from their deferral year. Ultimately they had to decide whether to drop out of college or not.

#### Congress Believes

A scenario where students are misplaced within the system which has a direct implication on their education and living costs which in turn could force them under the living standards of the EU, and forcing theme to consider becoming homeless is totally unacceptable and the Department should take responsibility for the errors made, but further deliver appropriate training for the protection of students.

#### Congress Mandates

Officer Board to lobby the Minister for Social Protection and the Minister for Education and Skills to ensure both departments liaise in order to deliver efficient training and services to ensure students who may have returned to education are met by Community Welfare Officers trained specially in the area of students who may be in higher education.

#### Congress Further Mandates

Officer Board to lobby the relevant government departments to ensure, regardless of schemes, that once student status, on presentation of documentation from the HEI of the student’s study, is presented, then a student tag is applied to the case of the student in question.

## 16 WEL 18 Student Personal Safety Research

#### Congress notes:

The importance in educating students on safety and personal safety whilst on and off campus.

#### Congress recognises:

The need for research to develop a campaign and training for students and officers alike in the area of personal safety that is safety focused and not victim blaming.

#### Congress mandates:

The VP Welfare to conduct research in consultation with external expert groups and organisations in the area of personal safety.

#### Congress further mandates:

The VP welfare to bring a report to national council on completion of the research.

## 15 WE2 Student assistance fund

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **USI Congress Notes:**

**The importance of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), the role it plays in supporting students across the country, and how quickly it runs out in many HEI's around the country.**

#### **USI Congress further Notes:**

**The SAF “Best Practice Framework Document 2013” written by USI.**

#### **USI Congress Notes with Concern:**

**The high volume of SAF motions currently on the policy manual.**

#### **USI Congress hereby deletes:**

**14 / Wel 7, 13 / Wel 8, 13 / Wel 9, 12 / Wel 1, 11 / Wel 13**

#### **USI Congress therefore Mandates:**

**That the President and Vice President for Welfare campaign for increased funding for the SAF scheme, and lobby against any cutbacks to the fund.**

#### **USI Congress further Mandates:**

**The Vice President for Welfare to provide briefing to all MO's on all aspects of the SAF, and seek representation on all committees relating to SAF on their campuses, and to also continually lobby the HEA to redraft the guidelines for the SAF and to include recommendations to increase efficiency of systems.**

## 15 WE 13 Mental Health Awareness

#### REAPPROVED 2018 WITH MINOR AMENDMENT – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress acknowledges**

**The success of mental health awareness through the ‘Chats for Change’ and ‘See Change’ campaigns which have a significant focus on talking to someone about mental health and an individual’s well-being.**

#### **Congress notes**

**That although talking is a crucial message to the campaigns, some individuals require the use of Anti-depressants or Anti-Anxiety medication etc.**

#### **Congress Further notes**

**That the lack of information around the use of medication can lead to stigmatisation of individuals who use medication for mental health issues and can cause a great deal of distress for individuals who have the use of medication suggested to them upon presenting to a GP on a mental health issue.**

#### **Congress therefore mandates**

**The Vice-President for Welfare to include information on medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.**

## 15 WE 25 Gambling

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress notes**

**The addictive nature of gambling and how easily accessible gambling can be with development of apps such as Paddy Power and close proximity of betting outlets to third level campuses.**

#### **Congress notes with concern**

**Evidence of gambling that is frequently appearing on bank statements through Student Assistance Fund Applications and the number of students who are faced with growing debt problems due to gambling.**

#### **Congress further notes**

**In an article on the Irish Examiner last March, Paul Mullins of Aiseiri, warns that among under-25s, as many as 90% start gambling on a handheld device. The alarming aspect of online gambling is that it reverses the trend of normal gambling given that it is overwhelmingly dominated by those under 25.**

**The Institute of Public Health said its studies indicated that gambling among young people was thought to be three times more prevalent than those aged over 21 years – a trend entirely attributed to online sites.**

#### **Congress Mandates**

**The Vice President for Welfare to work with the relevant organisations to develop a campaign to inform students of the effects of gambling and recognising an addiction.**

### 14 WEL 3 CASEWORK TRAINING

**Congress notes:**

The high levels of casework Students’ Union officers deal with on a yearly basis.

**Congress further notes:**

The need for training and support throughout the year when handling large number of individual cases.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare, in consultation with other members of Officer Board, to organise intensive casework training for Students’ Union officers each year. This training must include; referral, role plays, data protection and managing casework records. This training must be completed before September each year.

### 14 WEL 4 APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST) FOR STUDENTS’ UNION OFFICERS

**Congress notes:**

According to the CSO figures, there were 507 suicides registered in 2012 or 11 per 100,000 of the population.

**Congress believes:**

Everyone has a role to play in suicide prevention and that Students’ Unions need to be equipped with the skills to intervene in a possible suicide if it arises. The more people who feel confident and willing to explore possible signs of suicide risk and provide support and help, the more lives could be saved.

**Congress acknowledges:**

ASIST, the two-day interactive workshop in suicide first-aid that is highly beneficial. It encourages honest, open and direct talk about suicide as part of preparing people to provide suicide first aid.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That specific ASIST for Students’ Union officers was delivered for the first time in December 2013.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare to organise Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) each year for Students’ Union Officers. This must be completed by September each year.

### 14 WEL 6 AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELLORS IN THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION

**Congress notes:**

A study commissioned by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors that found cutbacks have significantly reduced the time available for one-to-one student counselling in schools.

**Congress notes with concern:**

Reports from Welfare Officers, that waiting lists for an appointment with Counselling services are at least two weeks with some students waiting up to 6 weeks in extreme cases and also the increasing numbers of students reporting mental health issues.

**Congress further notes:**

That there is an embargo on hiring of more public sector staff and that many Institutes may not be able to afford to hire more counselling staff either.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare to lobby the relevant bodies including the Minister for Disability, Equality, Mental Health and Older People to lift the embargo on the hiring of counselling staff in Higher Education Institutes and for increased funding to be given specifically for the provision of adequate Counselling services to all Third Level Students either through the direct employment of more Counsellors or in purchasing external counselling session hours.

### 14 WEL 7 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

**Congress notes:**

The importance of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and the role it plays to support students in hardship across the country. 83

**Congress notes with concern:**

How quickly the SAF has run out in many Higher Education Institutions around the country showing the increased strain on students’ financial situation.

**Congress affirms:**

That with the current plight of student finances across the country, the current allocation of funds to student hardship is not fit for purpose.

**Congress mandates:**

That the President and the Vice President Welfare to campaign for increased funding for the SAF scheme, and to update National Council in August 2014.

### 14 WEL 9 STUDENTS IN REMOTE AREAS

**Congress observes:**

That many colleges have courses in which students can be based in remote areas for much of the duration of their course.

**Congress believes:**

That students in rural areas can feel a sense of isolation and issues such as mental health, alcohol abuse and road safety can be prevalent among students in these areas.

**Congress further believes:**

That it can be difficult for MO’s to reach these campuses to be of support to these students and many of the campuses where these students may be based are far from central student support services and local support services.

**Congress applauds:**

That some organisations have made efforts to tackle the above issues in rural communities i.e. Headstrong have set up Jigsaw Centres in communities in many parts of Ireland.

**Congress believes:**

That there should be more focus put on supporting our students in remote areas and communities

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare and Regional Vice Presidents to support MO’s who are faced with this issue and to work with MO’s on developing a support system or campaign in order to reach out to these students.

### 14 WEL 10 WATER SAFETY

**Congress observes:**

That many students and young people are not aware of water safety and the harms of swimming or activity, in and around unsupervised open waters.

**Congress notes with regret:**

The total number of drowning’s in 2012 were 147(Accidental 65, Suicide 4, Undetermined 33). There were many more in 2013 due to the hot weather during the summer months.

**Congress applauds:**

The work of Irish Water Safety in promoting water safety and local Civil Defense groups in the emergency response service they provide.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Welfare to run a water safety mini- campaign on water safety in promoting water safety and awareness.

### 14 WEL 11 MORNING AFTER PILL

**Congress notes:**

The cost of the Morning After Pill is currently unregulated here in Ireland, and prices vary hugely throughout counties, cities, towns and pharmacy chains in Ireland.

**Congress further notes:**

Getting the morning After Pill can set you back anywhere from €10 to €45 or even higher.

**Congress believes:**

That a standard, maximum price should be set for the Morning After Pill, so that women are aware of how much the drug will cost them irrespective of where they live.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The VP Welfare to engage with other groups who are campaigning for maximum pricing for emergency contraception, including the Real Productive Health campaign, with the aim of setting a national maximum price for emergency contraception.

### 14 WEL 14 CONTINUITY OF THE HEAR ACCESS PROGRAMME

**Congress notes:**

The continued excellent work of the Access Service within third level higher education. Through the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR), the Access Service at colleges’ discretion, supplies an “access grant” to students, and also allows students to apply for an access Students Assistance Fund (SAF). While the Access Scheme is allocated funding from the SAF, Access students can chose to apply for the Access Scheme SAF finance support or for the general SAF finance support (this finance support is usually larger).

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of structure, continuity and shared information amongst colleges and institutes nationally in relation to their access schemes, and particularly their distributions and allocating of access SAF funds.

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of dialogue within USI in relation to the Higher Education Access Route and information available to elected Students’ Union representatives in relation to the Higher Education Access Route and access schemes.

**Congress mandates:**

That the USI Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, along with the USI Vice President for Welfare, to investigate the Access Scheme on a national level and to prepare a report for National Council in December 2014.

**Congress further mandates:**

The USI President to ensure that a workshop in relation to the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) takes place annually at Students’ Union Training.

### 14 WEL 16 STUDENT SUICIDE

**Congress notes with regret:**

The continual loss of student’s lives to suicide.

**Congress notes:**

The importance of local officers in the support structure for students who have experienced bereavement and who are contemplating taking their own life by suicide.

**Congress further notes:**

The importance of comprehensive training in bereavement support for local officers.

**Congress mandates:**

The VP for welfare to ensure that Safetalk training are offered to all Welfare Officers and any other officer who wish to avail of such training by September before students return to college.

### 13 WEL 14 SEXUAL VIOLENCE

##### Re-adopted Congress 2016, with Amendments (included). Expires Congress 2019

**Congress notes:**

That the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship has worked closely with the

Centre for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (Cosc). This relationship was instrumental in the compilation and promotion of the 2012/2013 USI ‘Say Something’ survey into students’ experiences of violence.

**Congress highly commends:**

The initiatives taken and work being conducted on sexual assault prevention and awareness-raising around issues of consent in a number of Member Organisations, specifically in the form of the ‘Don’t be that Guy’ campaign.

**Congress believes that:**

The victim is never to blame in incidences of sexual assault and/or rape. The ‘Don’t be that Guy’ campaign is particularly powerful and effective because it uses language that is directed at potential perpetrators rather than language that contributes to victim blaming and rape culture.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to work with Member Organisations to

coordinate a national campaign on sexual assault prevention and awareness-raising ‘Say Something’ survey and would preferably have an element that would coincide with around issues of consent. This campaign should be informed by the results of the USI induction and orientation periods in higher education institutions. This campaign should also be as inclusive as possible of all genders and sexualities.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and all members of USI Officer Board to ensure that any campaigns conducted by USI on area of sexual violence use the appropriate language and never contribute to culture of victim blaming or rape culture.

### 12 WEL 3 SEXUAL HEALTH WEBSITE

**Congress notes:**

There is large amount of paper material distributed in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

**Congress recognizes:**

The lack of a one-stop shop for sexual health information and support services on line.

**Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:**

To develop an all-inclusive web site which will contain relevant information about sexual health that can be used in conjunction with sexual health campaigns.

### 12 WEL 4 ALCOHOL ABUSE

**Congress notes:**

That alcohol consumption in Ireland doubled between 1970 and 2003, one the largest increases in the world during that period (Byrne, 2010).

**Congress recognises:**

Though consumption has fallen slightly since 2003, Irish consumption at 13.4 litres of pure alcohol per person is the second highest in the OECD (Mongan, 2007).

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the increase in alcohol consumption has caused a corresponding increase in alcohol related harms in Irish society, including alcohol related accidents and illnesses, alcohol related crime, alcohol related domestic abuse and alcohol related absences from work (Hope, 2008).

**Congress understands:**

That the Department of Health (RoI) and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI) have held a North South conference on alcohol misuse in January to explore some of the common issues in relation to the alcohol culture on both sides of the border. Both Departments recognizing the scope for sharing information and evidence based material, on an all-island basis, in a number of areas including the tackling of alcohol abuse.

**Congress believes:**

That the issue of alcohol abuse significantly impacts on the welfare of our members. Furthermore, that we as representatives; entrusted with protecting the interests our members, should be proactive in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse.

**Congress mandates the President, the Vice President for Welfare:**

To engage with the Department of Health (RoI), the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (NI), before July 2013 in addressing the issue of alcohol abuse.

### 12 WEL 5 EXAM STRESS PACKS

**Congress notes:**

That many students experience, incidences of elevated stress and anxiety around the examination period.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The affects of increased stress and anxiety on students’ physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, and the subsequent impact on their examination performance.

**Congress congratulates:**

The Welfare Officer and members of Officerboard for their hard work in tacking issues surrounding students’ physical, mental, and emotional welfare.

**Congress believes:**

That students should be provided with adequate support and guidance around the issue of stress and anxiety, including how to diagnose the condition, what affects it has on students, what self help techniques are recommended, and general management advice.

**Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare:**

To develop and source a stress pack and booklet to be distributed to MO’s before the winter and summer exams. These should be available for December 2012.

### 12 WEL 6 DRINK RESPONSIBLY CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

That alcohol consumption has increased substantially in the past number of years and Ireland now consumes more alcohol per adult than most of its European counterparts.

**Congress is saddened:**

By the linkages drawn between alcohol and related harm, with reference to a report by the HSE in 2008, including; injuries, hospital admissions, mortality, driving, street violence, domestic violence, and road injuries.

**Congress applauds:**

The Welfare Officer for engaging with Drink Aware, and other related groups in creating awareness about excessive alcohol consumption, and promoting the responsible consumption of alcohol.

**Congress believes:**

That the issue of alcohol abuse significantly impacts on the welfare of our members.

**Congress further believes:**

That as student representatives we should be proactive in creating awareness around the issue of excessive alcohol consumption, and campaign for responsibility in this area.

**Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare:**

To develop and implement a USI National Drink Responsibly Campaign before July 2013, and to carry out same on an annual basis thereafter in order to create awareness around alcohol consumption rates, and encourage its responsible consumption.

### 12 WEL 7 SUICIDE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The level of work the previous Welfare Officer has put into the Mental Health Campaign for the student population.

**Congress also notes:**

The difficulty in designing a campaign or highlighting the issue of suicide prevention/awareness which is not threatening to students.

**Congress recognises:**

That suicide remains a key issue for students.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Welfare Officer to organise, design and run a National Suicide Prevention Campaign that would be rolled out right across the Country on a Specific Day.

### 12 WEL 9 PHYSICAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR USI

**Congress notes:**

11/WEL 02 mandating the creation of a USI Physical Health Strategy.

**Congress therefore adopts the proposed:**

USI Physical Health Strategy 2012-2015

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare Vice President to both follow the USI Physical Health Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.

This motion should apply for three years.

### 12 WEL 10 ALCOHOL POLICY FOR USI

**Congress notes:**

11/ Wel 4 mandates the creation of strategy documents in the main areas of work for the welfare officer, including sexual health, finance, physical health, accommodation, alcohol awareness, substance abuse and any others that are appropriate.

**Congress therefore adopts the proposed:**

USI Alcohol Policy 2012-2015

**Congress therefore deletes:**

11/ Wel 11 Anti Social Behavior Campaign

10/ Wel 3 Student and Alcohol

10/ Wel 8 Anti-Social Behavior

09/ Wel 8 Drug Awareness

09/ 13 Alcohol Awareness Campaign

**Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:**

To both follow the USI Alcohol Policy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations and action points by disseminating the policy at the start of the year as well as providing support and training throughout the year.

This motion should apply for three years.

### 12 WEL 13 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

**Congress notes:**

That substance abuse is a growing problem in Irish society.

**Congress further notes:**

09/Wel 5 – Counselling Service and 09/Wel 8 – Drug awareness mandates as these demonstrate the need for a formulated strategy document to be created in the area of substance abuse.

**Congress mandates the Welfare Vice President:**

To create a Substance abuse strategy document that would contain information in relation to drug awareness, campaigns, how to combat addictions and other items deemed essential to be included by welfare working group. Appropriate training should be provided for Welfare Officers over the summer period so they can handle cases in this area.

This motion shall apply till December 2012.

### 12 WEL 14 EXAM STRESS CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The work that MOs put into Exam Stress Campaigns across the Country in the run up to Exams.

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of support on a National Level to the roll out of these Campaigns and the lack of an overall Exam Stress Campaign.

**Congress mandates the VP/South, VP/BMW and the Welfare Officer:**

To investigate the possibility of sourcing the materials, supplying and distributing ‘Exam Stress Packs’ to the MOs along with a resource pack that contains information on support services for the students.

### 11 WEL 12 MONEY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

AMENDMENTS SHOWN IN STRIKETHROUGH (REMOVAL) AND RED (ADDITION)

**Congress notes:**

The continuing financial strain that is being placed on families and students at this difficult time.

**Congress further notes:**

With these hard times, many students are withdrawing from third level college due to financial difficulties.

**Congress therefore mandates the Vice President for Welfare:**

To publish a financial guide to aid students with their budgeting problems each year

### 10 WEL 2 STUDENT PREGNANCY

**Congress notes:**

The lack of policy and support in the area of student parenting, both for student mothers and students Fathers.

**Congress further notes:**

That while staff who fall pregnant are recognised under equality law, students exist within a grey area of legislation in this sector and subject to discrimination as the college chooses in terms of concessions and special accommodations.

**Congress applauds:**

The efforts of institutions such as Mary Immaculate College in the formation of a student parent liaison officer.

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare and Equality Officers to research best practice policies on student parents both within Ireland, the UK and beyond with a view to formulate a template for local COs to negotiate with their institutions.

The Welfare and Equality Officers to meet and work with relevant organisations with a view to formulating a policy document for Welfare officers and other relevant CO officers as to how best to support student parents and what supports are needed. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 14 - - 14 –

The Welfare and Equality Officers to HEI authorities for better provisions and rights for student parents.

### 10 WEL 7 SEXUAL HEALTH

**Congress notes with concern:**

The worrying lack of information and knowledge among Student Health Services and other college supports about issues pertaining to lesbian sexual health.

**Congress further notes:**

That oftentimes, women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer are unaware of lesbian sexual health issues.

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare Officer to work with the LGBT RO to ensure that the sexual health module at UOS also covers lesbian sexual health issues; so that the welfare officers can be equipped with the knowledge to deal with these issues.

### 10 WEL 11 NON- ACADEMIC SERVICES

**Congress notes:**

The current lack of quality assurance systems with regards to an Irish National Policy Framework for non-academic students services provided by the third level institution, such as health centres, counselling services etc.

**Congress further notes:**

The importance of quality assurance with regard to non-academic aspects of student services.

**Congress recognizes:**

The value of the overall student experience within the higher education system in Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and the Welfare Officer to lobby the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education for the formation of a non-academic student services policy relating to quality assurance.

### 09 WEL 1 EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

**Congress notes:**  
Dependant on location, time of week, travel plans, unforeseen circumstances (i.e. sex without consent or awareness) etc. that availing of a doctors appointment for aforesaid prescription may not be possible, and that the efficacy of EC decreases significantly over a 72-hour period.

**Congress believes:**  
That people are entitled to complete control over their sexual reproduction and fertility, and that freer availability of ECs in Ireland is essential to this intrinsic right.

**Congress welcomes:**  
Research carried out on the effects of the ECP introduction in Britain by the *British Journal of Medicine* that reported: a 10% decrease in the amount of teenage pregnancies with only a 2% increase in those using the ECP following its over-the-counter introduction no reduction in the usage of other contraceptive methods

And the research document prepared for this debate on the myths, realities and physiological & health impacts of the different ECPs by UCC's Welfare Officer, Keith O' Brien.

**Congress mandate:**

The USI Welfare Officer to co-ordinate with relevant groups to provide more comprehensive information on the different forms of EC.

### 09 WEL 2 ABORTION RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

That USI is mandated to lobby the government and other relevant bodies to develop greater access to abortion services for all women within the state (06/WEL 6 Abortion).

**Congress further notes:**

That USI’s involvement in this debate in the past (SPUC vs. Grogan) led to the changing of legislation so that information about abortion could be distributed freely in the state.

**Congress recognises:**

That in many student unions abroad and indeed in many organisations worldwide the issue of abortion is viewed as an issue of equality and women’s rights .

**Congress further recognises:**

That the issue is one of concern for Welfare Officers around the country.

**Congress acknowledges:**

The establishment of the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign which aims to end the hypocrisy of exiling women in crisis pregnancy that choose to have an abortion. The campaign includes various strands, including a litigation strand, a public awareness strand and a national and international advocacy strand.

**Congress mandates:**

The Welfare and Equality Officer to work with the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign to once again make this issue a priority for Irish Women.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Welfare and Equality Officer to raise awareness of the Safe and Legal (in Ireland) Abortion Rights Campaign to USI members and to support the campaign in any of its actions.

# EQUALITY

## NC18 EQ 1 : Disability Conference

### Proposed by the USI Vice President for Welfare

#### Council Notes:

Reports released by the Association for Higher Education Access & Disability (AHEAD), of which USI is a board member, finds that while numbers of students with disabilities participating in higher education continues to rise, significant barriers remain.

#### Council Notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to removing the stigma from all disabilities, challenging perceptions and encouraging all members of our society to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices. A key part of this ongoing work can be done through student engagement at a national-level event, to create a space for networking, dialogue, and empowerment to leadership roles.

#### Council Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise a one day training and networking event for students with disabilities before the end of April 2018.

## 2018 EQ 1 : Gender Recognition of Students

### Proposed by Institute of Art, Design and Technology Students’ Union & the USI Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

#### Congress notes:

Trans and non-binary students have difficulty changing their name and gender on college records such as exam results, roll, student cards etc.

#### Congress recognises:

The considerable distress that not being able to be recognised as who they are can have on trans and non binary students.

#### Congress Notes:

The work ongoing of the Gender Recognition Act Review Committee examining the Gender Recognition Act 2015 due to be complete by Summer 2018.

#### Congress applauds:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship recent submission to the Gender Recognition Act Review and the current work being done in MOs on Gender Identity and Expression Policies.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to campaign for a system-wide agreement from CAO level upwards, regarding the facilitation of name-changes as well as the inclusion of non-binary identities.

#### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the HEA (Higher Education Authority) to set up a working group with the USI, THEA (Technological Higher Education Association), the IUA (Irish Universities Association) and the Department of Education to identify a robust and agreed system-level framework, so that applications for name-changes while the student is attending their third level institution is met with a consistent response regardless of institution, rather than a case-by-case, ad-hoc, and discretionary reaction that often depends on the staff member the student speaks to.

## 2018 EQ 2 : Mature Student Campaign

### Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

#### Congress notes

The large numbers of mature students attending third level education and the difficulties they face.

#### Congress applauds:

The success of events such as Mature Student Conventions/Seminars provided by USI in the past.

#### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run a Mature Student Seminar annually in the first semester of each academic year.

#### Congress Notes

That events for matures students may be inaccessible due to other commitments of potential attendees.

#### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to create an online forum for mature students in order for them to still obtain the benefits of networking at a regional and national level.

#### Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to continue their work in supporting the development of mature student officers and societies in MOs.

#### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Campaigns to create a support document for local MOs which should include, but is not limited to, information on running their own mature student events, information to help development mature student supports on campuses and other links to mature student organisations.

#### Congress repeals

14 EQ 1, 12 OU 12, 15 OU 13, 12 OU 12. (SIC)

## 2018 EQ 3 : Transgender Health Care

### Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

Transgender and Non Binary people are people who don't identify with the gender they were assigned at birth. These people may seek medical methods of transition.

#### Congress further notes:

The work done by transgender and non-binary activist groups and USI in their submissions to the Gender Recognition Act.

#### Congress notes with regret:

Transgender and non-binary people are currently unable to dictate their own need for hormone therapy, and need to be given a diagnosis under an outdated ‘medical-diagnostic model’.

#### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the HSE to provide training for healthcare professionals in Ireland in transgender issues and their healthcare needs.

#### Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship lobby the Minister for Health to replace the current medical-diagnostic model of treating transgender and non-binary people in place of an informed consent model, to allow people to receive the treatments they need.

## 2018 EQ 4 : Gender Equality Audit

### Proposed by the Vice President for the Dublin Region

#### Congress notes

That self-defining women are still significantly under-represented in Students’ Union politics, as well as politics nationally. For the year 2017/2018, less than 20% of Presidents in USI affiliated Students’ Unions were women.

#### Congress recognises

The ongoing work being done within Students’ Unions to encourage more self-defining women to run for elected positions within their Students’ Unions.

#### Congress applauds

The Women Lead Projects rolled out this year and in previous years by USI and the continued growth in participation of these projects.

#### Congress further notes

The importance of data collection to further develop the Women Lead Project.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to conduct a gender equality audit of Students’ Unions and their structures to support and inform the ongoing work of USI in this area.

## 2018 EQ 5 : Universal design for learning

### Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with an amendment also proposed by them

#### Congress notes:

Learning materials used in lectures, tutorials, and for study are frequently inaccessible to students with different requirements

#### Congress recognises:

The universal design for learning approach campaigns for more user friendly, varied and accessible materials for students who have a physical/ hidden disability, mental health condition, student parents, and students whose first language is not English.

#### Congress mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Academic Affairs to work with relevant organisations to support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning wherever possible.

### 17 EQ EM 2 Motion of Solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa

##### Congress notes

with deep concern the severe deterioration of the health conditions in recent weeks of Ibrahim Halawa, the Irish citizen interned in Egypt, who is currently on hunger strike.

##### Congress is horrified by

the consistently barbaric and inhumane detention of Ibrahim by the Egyptian regime during his now three year internment.

##### Congress is disgusted by

the lack of priority given by the Irish government to the detention of a young Irish citizen whose life is now in peril.

##### Congress in its long standing support of human rights states

its solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa in his righteous fight for freedom.

##### Congress therefore mandates

USI to call on the Irish government to intensify their efforts for the release of Ibrahim Halawa.

##### Congress further mandates

the USI Vice-President for Equality &amp; Citizenship to engage with the relevant human rights organisations to support the campaign for the release of Ibrahim Halawa.

### 

### 17 EQ1 Access to Orkambi, the Cystic Fibrosis medication

##### Congress Notes:

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is an inherited chronic illness that is acting as a barrier to education for students who suffer from it. Students with CF need regular IV drips where they must be admitted to hospital for long periods of time. These lengthy visits to hospital affect students’ college attendance.

##### Congress further notes:

Orkambi has the potential to improve the living conditions and the educational experience for these students.

##### Congress Mandates:

VP Welfare and VP Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Government to make Orkambi available in Ireland for those who require it.

### 17 EQ2 Equality Grounds

##### Congress notes:

That the VP Equality & Citizenship works on behalf of students in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

##### Congress mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to review the equality legislation in both legal jurisdictions in their work on behalf of students across the island.

### 17EQ3 Integration of displaced persons into education

##### Congress recognises

The ongoing refugee crisis, in which over 20 million people have been displaced due to war, terrorism, and other conflicts.

##### Congress asserts

That education is an emancipator and affords people the tools with which to become independent and self-determinant.

##### Congress calls on

The Irish government to partake in the resettlement and relocation of displaced persons (such as refugees and asylum seekers) in numbers appropriate to the scale of the crisis.

##### Congress calls on

The education sector in Ireland to proactively support the integration of such displaced persons.

##### Congress calls on

The Minister for Education to extend “domestic” fee status to such displaced persons resettled in Ireland who wish to pursue their studies. This status should also extend to eligibility for the student maintenance grant and other student supports.

##### Congress calls on

Institutions of third-level education to follow the lead of Dublin City University and pursue “University of Sanctuary” designation.

##### Congress therefore mandates

The officer board to campaign for the integration of such displaced persons into education in Ireland with particular focus on access, student supports, retention, recognition of prior learning and cultural integration, the latter including the provision of English language lessons.

##### Congress also mandates

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to provide for student leaders, particularly elected officers, to become “No Hate Speech” ambassadors.

### 17 EQ4 Expansion of ‘2in2u’ Campaign

#### Jointly proposed by the VP Equality & Citizenship & WIT Students' Union

Congress recognises:  
The organisation Women’s Aid runs a successful ‘2in2u’ dating abuse campaign which is supported by the Union of Students in Ireland.  This campaign helps young women to spot the ‘danger signs’ of dating abuse and provides information to combat online stalking and digital abuse, as well as signposting support services.

Congress notes:  
The campaign, whilst being very beneficial, has limitations in regards to the types of relationships and genders it focuses on.

##### Congress recognises:

That several national organisations are doing work in the area of domestic violence, sexual harrassment, violence, and emotional abuse, and the USI should build partnerships with them in order to ensure students are part of their target audiences moving forward.

Congress mandates:  
That VP Equality & Citizenship and VP Welfare to work with Women’s Aid to expand their 2in2u campaign to become more inclusive of all genders and relationships. If this is not feasible, then a similar campaign and materials should be developed to compliment the 2in2u campaign which is more inclusive of gender and sexuality.

##### Congress further mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to develop a partnership with the National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) in their project work nationally to end sexual violence and harassment at third level.

## 16 EQ 1 Decriminalisation of Sex Work

### Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship

#### Congress Notes

Sex work refers to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, web-camming, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street). Currently prostitution (the exchange of sexual services for money) is not illegal, but associated activities (soliciting in a public place, kerb crawling, operating a brothel) are.

#### Congress Notes with Concern

With the rise in living costs, the potential increase in tuition fees, the inadequacy of the maintenance grant, and various other personal reasons it is highly likely that some students do and will do sex work alongside their studies.

#### Congress Does Not Believe

That anyone should be forced into sex work as a means of supporting themselves and that the current system fails those it affects directly: sex workers.

#### Congress Applauds

In August 2015, Amnesty International voted to adopt policy to protect human rights of sex workers. The resolution recommended that they develop a policy that supports the full decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual sex work. The policy will also call on states to ensure that sex workers enjoy full and equal legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence.

#### Congress Believes

That there should be far more support for sex workers, both within the industry and for those looking to get out of it. Sex workers should be fully supported when seeking to leave the industry, especially through the opportunities to re-skill or upskill through education.

#### Congress Believes

Decriminalisation would ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or violence at work without the worry of criminal repercussions, work together for safety, and that those who wish to leave the sex industry are not left with criminal records as a result of their job.

#### Congress Mandates

Officer Board to support and campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work. This is to be done through the support of sex worker organisations who work to improve the lives of sex workers across Ireland.

## 16 EQ 2 Decriminalisation of Drugs

### Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship

#### Congress Notes

On July 17th 2015, USI National Council formally adopted a stance that called for USI to support a call for decriminalisation of drugs, with a view to taking a similar approach to the one in place in Portugal. Following the adoption of this stance, the VP Equality and Citizenship made a submission to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice, Defence and Equality as part of their Drugs Policy Review process.

#### Congress Notes

College is a time when many students are exposed to drugs. For many students, this exposure can happen at an even younger age. There is currently very little information being given to students at second or third level about drug consumption or risks. There is a culture of fear amongst wider society around talking about drugs in an informed and responsible manner.

#### Congress Also Notes

That if a student gets a conviction for personal use, this can have lifelong implications. It can prevent a student from accessing a visa to certain countries, a job which requires Garda vetting, certain types of insurance, and can impede them from availing of further education or training. A criminal conviction also limits an individual’s chances of social mobility, which results in them becoming dependent on the state.

#### Congress Further Notes

On July 1st 2001, Portugal decriminalised drug use, acquisition and possession of illicit drugs when conducted for personal use as part of a comprehensive new policy. This quantity of personal use amounted to up to 10 days’ supply for personal use. The policy also included a significant expansion in drug treatment, including methadone maintenance, to help dependent users get away from injecting heroin.

#### Congress Believes

There is a need for health professionals, parents and educators to acknowledge the fact that young people often engage in drug use, and at the very least will be exposed to drug use at some point in their lives. Drug use cannot be tackled by policy measures which are only aimed at controlling the supply of drugs. It is futile to only have supply reduction strategies in place of more cost-effective and evidence based investments in harm-reduction and education.

#### Congress Mandates

Officer Board to lobby for the decriminalisation of drugs in line with the Portuguese Model. USI should also lobby for investment into treatment and health facilities along with education about drug use and risk for young adults and those of school age.

## 16 EQ 3 Equality Strategy

### Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

#### Congress Notes

The area of Equality and Citizenship is very broad, with a number of areas to be covered.

#### Congress Mandates

The adoption of the proposed Equality Strategy.

## 16 EQ 4 “Repeal the 8th“ Strategy

### Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

#### Congress Notes

There has been promise of a referendum to “Repeal The 8th“ amendment to the Irish Constitution in the lifetime of this government.

#### Congress Mandates

The adoption of the “Repeal the 8th“ Strategy.

## 16 EQ 5 Traveller Support

### Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

#### Congress Notes

There is policy for USI to campaign for the recognition of Traveller ethnicity, but there is need for more to be done in this area to adequately support Traveller students.

#### Congress Notes

The needs of potential and current Traveller students are specific and that officers do not receive any training in how to support these students.

#### Congress Mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to ensure there is support training provided to sabbatical officers.

#### Congress Further Mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to map out supports and services available for Travellers in third level institutions so as to allow for the development of a support network and reaching out campaign.

## 15 EQ 1 Women in Leadership

#### **Congress notes**

**that motion 14/EQ9 stated: “That women are still significantly under-represented in Student Union politics, as well as politics nationally. Only 20% of Presidents are women in USI member colleges are women. Only 33% of UK Students Union Presidents are women. In the Dáil Éireann the representation of women in even worse. Only 15% of TDs are women. In local councils across Ireland the representation of women is below 20%. In Northern Ireland, only 19% of MLAs in Stormont are women Ireland ranks 23rd out of 27 EU countries for their percentage of women in parliament.**

#### **Congress acknowledges**

**that significant work has been undertaken by MOs in empowering women to run for leadership positions in the past year.**

#### **Congress applauds**

**the fantastic job USI Pink Training does in empowering members of the student LGBT community to run for SU leadership and also the grassroots engagement that exposes USI to a new generation of Student Leaders.**

#### **Congress calls for**

**the USI to expand the Women In Leadership campaign.**

#### **Congress mandates**

**the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to take the template provided by USI Pink Training and adapt it to create a weekend training event with the aim of empowering Women not only in their SU’s but in their college, community and careers.**

### 14 EQ 2 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

**Congress believes:**

That women are still significantly under-represented in Student Union politics, as well as politics nationally.

Only 20% of Presidents are women in USI member colleges are women.

Only 33% of UK Students Union Presidents are women.

In the Dáil Éireann the representation of women in even worse. Only 15% of TDs are women. In local councils across Ireland the representation of women is below 20%.

In Northern Ireland, only 19% of MLAs in Stormont are women

Ireland ranks 23rd out of 27 EU countries for their percentage of women in parliament.

**Congress also believes:**

Despite forming a majority of students in higher and further education, women are under-represented in powerful positions in colleges and students’ union.

Women’s representation in colleges and students’ unions is vital to women’s equality and to overcoming the inequality and discrimination that women face.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President and the VP Equality and Citizenship, to run a national campaign supporting and empower women in leadership and create a support network in order to encourage more women candidates to run for election.

The USI President and the VP Equality and Citizenship to campaign on increasing the number of women who run for all sabbatical positions, all student councillors and voluntary roles within students unions.

The VP Equality and Citizenship to make links with the NUS-USI and the NUS Women’s Campaign and work together to encourage women in leadership.

### 14 EQ 3 MARRIAGE EQUALITY

**Congress notes:**

USI policy 12/EQ4 mandates USI Officers to campaign for equal access to civil marriage in Ireland.

**Congress also notes**:

That the Government have committed to holding a referendum on marriage equality in Ireland in 2015.

**Congress believes:**

That equal access to civil marriage in Ireland is one of the most important civil rights issues of our generation and that the students of this country have a valuable role to play in making this a reality.

**Congress adopts:**

The ‘Students for Marriage Equality 2015’ campaign strategy document as USI policy.

**Congress mandates:**

All of USI Officer Board to implement the actions in ‘Students for Marriage Equality 2015’ strategy.

**Congress also mandates:**

The USI President, the USI Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI Vice-President for Campaigns to oversee the implementation of the ‘Students for Marriage Equality 2015’ strategy and to report to every National Council in lead up to the referendum on the progress of the campaign.

### 14 EQ 4 LGBT\* FRIENDLY CAMPUS

**Congress notes:**

That many institutions do not have an official stance on being a LGBTQ Friendly campus.

**Congress applauds:**

The promotion of equality and anti-discrimination nationally.

**Congress believes:**

USI could work with LGBTQ organisations in the development of criteria that would deem colleges to be “LGBTQ Friendly campuses”.

**Congress further believes:**

That this could be rewarded with national recognition and that this would be of benefit to colleges marketing for second level students.

**Congress mandates:**

VP for Equality and Citizenship, Campaigns officer and regional officers to work with LGBTQ organisations in developing a framework that could be applied to colleges in order to give them a “LGBTQ Friendly Campus” status.

### 14 EQ 5 REGIONAL LGBT TRAINING EVENT

**Congress commends:**

The good work completed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship along with USI and Students’ Unions nationally on the organisation of Pink Training.

**Congress notes:**

The importance of Pink Training and the potential value of another event of this nature on a regional basis.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the regional vice presidents to work with various LGBT societies to organise regional LGBT training events each year.

### 13 EQ 1 ADVOCATING FOR STUDENT SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUSIVE REGARDING THE REGISTRATION AND TREATMENT OF LGBT STUDENTS

**Congress acknowledges:**

Every student’s right to equal access to Student Services in third level institutions.

**Congress believes:**

That Students’ Unions have a vital role to play in advocating for the recognition and realisation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender rights. This can include educating students’ services and ensuring that LGBT persons have opportunities to express and disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression when registering, accessing and availing of these services.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The negative impact that limited registration forms can have on people who identify as an orientation or gender identity which is not included on forms and that this can reflect a lack of awareness of these issues by service providers. This may cause students to feel isolated when registering, accessing and availing of services on campus and this may deter students from using these services.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice president for Equality and Citizenship to work with Students’ Unions to advocate that students’ services teams, including healthcare professionals and counsellors, are educated and inclusive regarding LGBT rights and experiences. This may include organising and/or providing training if necessary.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice president for Equality and Citizenship to advocate that registration forms for accessing students’ services acknowledge diverse identifications in the fields of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression e.g. “what is your preferred pronoun” rather than “Him/Her Male/Female”.

### 13 EQ 3 EQUITY OF ACCESS TO USI NATIONAL COUNCIL

**Congress commends:**

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship on the creation of an equality policy for National Council.

**Congress notes:**

There have been issues raised this year regarding the equity of access of officers to National Council based on the scheduling of council dates.

**Congress further notes:**

The equality policy was voted on and passed unanimously at National Council but there has been no implementation by National Council of this policy since it was passed.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship to review the equality policy when they first enter office. This review should take into consideration what measurements need to be in place to ensure the equality policy is put into action. The review also needs to ensure that USI National Council is accessible as possible to the officers elected nationally to represent their students.

### 13 EQ 5 NEGOTIATION OF MATURE STUDENT/ESTRANGED STUDENT FINANCIAL ACCOUNT(S)

**Congress notes:**

The growing financial difficulties across the board for all students.

**Congress further notes:**

The difficulties facing many mature students, and students that have been estranged from their parents/guardians, in gaining an indemnifier for the purposes of loan guarantor. This would also incorporate students that are returning to education to help better themselves but have existing bad credit due to numerous extenuating circumstances. For example bad credit, mortgage arrears, job loss etc.

**Congress stresses:**

The USI is mandated to be a free fees organisation and should not change stance on this. The motion proposed will serve to ensure equal access to financial loans for students that need such to fund their Higher Level education.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and other relevant officers to engage with an appropriate lending institution(s) to negotiate an account which will ensure equal access to banking facilities regardless of age and/or domestic situations for all students.

### 13 EQ 6 SECTION 37 EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT

**Congress notes:**

Under current Irish legislation – Section 37 of the Employment Equality Act allows school managements to discriminate against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender employees by taking ‘reasonably necessary’ action either by firing or refusing to hire them on the basis that they ‘undermine’ the religious ethos of the denominational school.

**Congress further notes:**

Union of Students in Ireland is a representative body of over 275,000 students – many of whom are LGBT and many of whom feel negatively affected by this legislation.

**Congress believes:**

This legislation is outdated and discriminatory by nature.

**Congress further believes:**

Thousands of LGBT students are aspiring teachers who may feel they cannot have a fulfilling career due to this legislation. Section 37 serves as a way of making LGBT students feel uncomfortable in the workplace and deters many LGBT students from pursuing careers in the teaching sector of Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI Campaigns Officer and USI VP for Equality and Citizenship to actively campaign for the repeal of Section 37, raising awareness among students, and contacting the relevant bodies such as Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland and other organisations to seek and show support for the campaign.

### 13 EQ 7 EQUALITY CAMPAIGNS FOR SINGLE FATHERS IN IRELAND

**Congress commends:**

The good work completed by the Vice President of equality and citizenship on raising equality and citizenship issues in the public domain.

**Congress notes:**

The work of USI in this area sees a very positive impact on different vulnerable stakeholders nationally and internationally by highlighting the facts while fighting their cause.

**Congress further notes:**

Single fathers make up a segment of the students represented by USI and the voice of these students is often overlooked politically.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship to meet with representatives of these students and to work on a campaign to highlight their issues. This should take place in the first semester of the year.

### 13 EQ 9 USI EQUALITY POLICY

**Congress notes:**

That USI National Council adopted an interim Equality policy for the organisation in September

2012. This policy was drawn up by the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship with advice from the Equality Authority.

**Congress believes:**

That it is important that the Union of Students in Ireland has an Equality Policy in place which states its commitment to equality and diversity and outlines the measures that USI Officer Board will take to ensure that principles of equality pervade the work of the organisation.

**Congress therefore adopts:**

The USI Equality Policy as adopted by the USI National Council in the 2012-2013 session.

(Put this into the Congress Pack as a policy to be adopted, not in the Clár)

USI Equality Policy

The Union of Students in Ireland is an inclusive organisation that values equality and diversity.

Services provided by the Union of Students in Ireland are available to all areas of the membership who will be supported to be equally able to access them.

As an employer, the Union of Students in Ireland will not tolerate any form of direct and indirect discrimination.

This policy is developed in line with the Equality Acts (Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011 & Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2011) prohibiting discrimination, including sexual harassment and harassment, victimisation and reasonable accommodation for customers with disabilities.

2. Equalities Statement:

The Union of Students in Ireland adopts the following Equalities Statement which Officers and staff and any person working with the Union of Students in Ireland is expected to support and uphold:

The Union of Students in Ireland recognises that discrimination can and does occur and that it can be direct, indirect or institutional. The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to adopting equal opportunities policies and procedures as an employer and service provider in order to combat discrimination and value diversity. The Union of Students in Ireland will not tolerate discrimination based on gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, membership of the Traveller community, gender expression, gender identity, country of origin, socio-economic background. The first nine grounds are those specifically mentioned by the Equality Acts but discrimination can occur also on other characteristics.

The Union of Students in Ireland reserves the right to add to these groups at any time.

The Union of Students in Ireland will seek to ensure that other companies from whom it has contracted to receive goods and services are aware that this policy is in place and that these companies are expected to comply with it or add equality clauses to the contract of service. Contracts for goods and services will be suspended if the contractor engages in sexual harassment, harassment or discrimination against customers or employees of this organisation.

The Union of Students in Ireland will take measures to combat inequality where necessary based on the characteristics identified in the Equalities statement. The organisation will strive to eliminate barriers that prevent members accessing the Union’s services and will ensure that reasonable accommodation is made for students with disabilities.

The Union of Students in Ireland encourages active participation from students in relation to the characteristics outlined in the Equalities Statement.

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to the effective communication of this policy to:

* All staff and elected officers of USI Officer Board,
* Member Organisations,
* Students,
* Business contacts

This will be done through:

• Publication and dissemination of the policy,

• Display of this policy on the USI website and in public areas of the organisation,

• Reference to the policy in business contracts,

• Reference to the policy in information

All staff employed should cooperate with the development and implementation of policies, procedures and practices to eliminate discrimination, accommodate diversity and promote equality for students. This requirement will be included in contracts of employment for all staff.

Training will be made available to all of USI Officer Board and staff in relation to the Equality Acts (Equal Status Acts 2000 to 2011 & Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2011).

The President of the Union of Students in Ireland and all of USI Officer Board has responsibility for upholding and implementing this policy.

This policy will be reviewed at the end of each academic year by USI Officer Board and any changes will be subject to approval by USI Congress.

### 13 EQ 10 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEGISLATION

**Congress notes:**

The commitment to legislating for collective bargaining agreed in the Programme for Government and the lack of movement on this.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The Campus.ie survey which claims that 35% of students in part time jobs feel it has negatively impacted on their studies.

**Congress further notes with concern:**

The United Nations' Human Rights Council's condemnation of the absence of collective bargaining legislation in Ireland.

**Congress believes:**

That every worker should have the option to join and be represented by a trade union without victimisation and that Ireland's failure to enact such legislation is a violation of the Right to Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That by being a member of a unionized workforce, students in part time employment are more likely to be aware of their rights as workers and therefore, less likely to be exploited. Furthermore, students are mostly employed in areas where exploitation is most common.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for the introduction of collective bargaining legislation that will lead to better working conditions for students and for this to be completed the end of 2013.

### 13 EQ 11 USI TO CAMPAIGN FOR EQUALITY BUDGETING IN IRELAND

**Congress notes:**

That a large body of recent research, both Irish and international, suggests that more equal societies fare better across a range of social outcomes, including education, health, crime and almost every conceivable area of human life.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That Equality Budgeting is an approach to economic policy-making that places equality at the centre of decisions concerning public expenditure and income. Through equality audits and impact assessments, Equality Budgeting provides information on how different sections of society are impacted by specific economic policy measures. The objective of Equality Budgeting is to ensure this information is used to reduce inequalities and to achieve the best equality outcomes for specific disadvantaged groups, but also for society at large. Over 60 countries have implemented or worked towards Equality Budgeting.

**Congress notes:**

With concern that while some progress was made in Ireland toward Equality Budgeting, particularly with a focus on gender, much of this was subsequently reversed with the weakening of the Gender Mainstreaming Unit in the Department of Justice since 2008, inaction on the implementation of the National Women’s Strategy, and the more general dismantling of the equality infrastructure in Ireland that has been on-going since the beginning of the economic crisis.

**Congress recognises:**

The 2011 TASC Report Eliminating Health Inequalities – A Matter of Life and Death, which suggests that inequality in Ireland is endemic, with 2009 figures suggesting that the top decile of Irish Society had incomes which were 11 times those of the bottom decile. The report also found a strong correlation between income levels and education levels, with those in the bottom decile most educationally disadvantaged.

**Congress affirms:**

Its commitment to the defence and promotion of all human rights as per the USI Constitution. The endemic inequality experienced by the citizens of this country against the achievement and realisation of the type of Ireland that the Union of Students in Ireland’s principles could lead to.

**Congress believes:**

That it is vitally important that the Government is always acutely aware of the long-term impact of the policies they enact.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and all of USI Officer Board to lend their full support to the Equality Budgeting campaign in Ireland and to lobby the Irish Government to introduce Equality Budgeting for Budget 2014.

### 13 EQ 12 USI LGBT ALLY CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The high level of student engagement with the USI LGBT Ally initiative and the effectiveness of this initiative at raising awareness of student support for LGBT rights and also of LGBT issues in Ireland.

**Congress believes**:

That this initiative should be continued and expanded by working with other organisations and by seeking funding for the campaign.

**Congress also believes:**

That there is potential to extend this campaign into wider society, outside of higher education institutions and that USI could look to engage businesses and service providers in this campaign. The expansion of this campaign could also be extended to secondary schools.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to seek sponsorship and funding for USI’s LGBT Ally campaign.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to engage with and seek endorsement and/or support from the following list, but not limited to this list, in relation to the campaign:

Association of Secondary School Teachers, Ireland;

All members of the Oireachtas;

The Irish Medical Organisation;

Irish National Teachers’ Organisation;

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy;

Gay Doctors Ireland;

Transgender Equality Network Ireland;

BeLonGTo;

LGBT Noise;

Marriage Equality;

SpunOut.ie;

The National Youth Council of Ireland;

The Irish Second-Level Students’ Union;

The Board of Irish College Societies

### 12 EQ 7 LGBT MENTAL HEALTH

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That the results of the Supporting LGBT Lives Study of 2009 showed serious issues for LGBT people in Ireland with regards to mental health and bullying.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That these results showed that “Almost 20 per cent of gay, lesbian, bisexual and Transgender people have attempted suicide and almost all saw this as related to their sexual identity and the experiences of being abused and feeling isolated”

**Congress further notes:**

The high levels of self harming within the young LGBT community and the levels of homophobia that still exist in many areas of Irish society.

**Congress mandates:**

That the VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP Welfare engage with various LGBT organisations like BeLonG To, TENI and develop policies for LGBT mental health and best practice for promotion of positive mental health for LGBT people.

### 11 EQ 1 LGBT AMBASSADORS

**Congress notes:**

That many second level educational institutions do not have a formal LGBT bullying policy.

**Congress appreciates:**

That access to third level education by students identifying themselves as from the LGBT committee is influenced by the experiences of those students at second level.

**Congress understands:**

That third level students acting as LGBT ambassadors to their own previous secondary schools will help promote understanding and acceptance of LGBT students in the second level education system.

**Congress thus mandates the LGBTRO, Deputy President and the Education Officer of USI:**

To co-ordinate the campaign to promote third level students as LGBT ambassadors in second level schools across the country.

### 11 EQ 2 LGBT STUDENT SURVEY

**Congress notes:**

There is very little statistical information about the experiences of LGBT people in third level education.

**Congress further notes:**

The serious lack of statistical information makes helping to improve the college experiences of LGBT students difficult.

**Congress therefore mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:**

To conduct a nationwide survey on the student experiences of LGBT students.

### 11 EQ 3 LGBT SOCIETY MANUAL

**Congress notes:**

There is a considerable lack of helpful resources for those trying to start up and run an LGBT society.

**Congress believes:**

It would greatly aid those wishing to run or establish an LGBT society if there was a comprehensive manual with information and resources for setting up and running society.

**Congress therefore mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:**

To produce a manual outlining ways to set up, run and maintain a successful LGBT society which

can be used by Student Unions as well as students.

**Congress further mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:**

To update the manual annually with any new information and to ensure it is ready for distribution in September when the new college year begins.

### 11 EQ 4 LGBT PACKS

**Congress notes:**

There is a serious lack of LGBT mental health, physical health and sexual health resources aimed directly at students in third level education.

**Congress believes:**

That an all round LGBT pack encompassing mental health and sexual health similar to the mental health packs and SHAG packs provided by USI to the general student body could drastically improve integration of LGBT students into the student body and improve awareness of the specific mental, physical and sexual health needs of LGBT students amongst non LGBT students.

**Congress mandates the LGBT Rights Officer:**

To develop and produce LGBT packs including information on mental health and sexual health for distribution in all COs.

### 11 EQ 5 DIRECT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**Congress notes:**

The effectiveness of the USI LGBT campaign in directly interacting with the USI membership through its links with student societies and USI Pink Training.

**Congress believes:**

The USI Equality campaign should follow a similar structure.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to organise an annual intervarsity event for each of the equality sub sections.

**Congress further mandates the Equality Officer:**

To enhance links with existing equality based student societies and to foster the development of further equality related societies in each CO.

### 11 EQ 7 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS

**Congress notes:**

The new immigration rules which came into effect on the 1st of January 2011 which change immigration regulations for non-EEA students.

**Congress further notes:**

That there are some regressive part of these new regulations including:

* The inability of international students who avail of the graduate employment scheme in Ireland to immediately return to post-graduate education in Ireland after completing the scheme.
* The fact that non-EEA students who have dependents in Ireland are unable to use public first and second level schools for their dependents, which causes major problems for students, particularly if their children are in primary school due to the small number of private first-level schools in Ireland.

**Congress mandates the Equality Officer:**

To work with the Irish Council for International Students to campaign and lobby for changes to be made to the immigration regulations in relation to the graduate employment scheme and the use of public schools for the dependents of international students.

### 10 EQ 1 CIVIL PARTNERSHIP BILL

**Congress notes:**

That the proposed Civil Partnership Bill falls short of offering members of the LGBT community many of the same rights and responsibilities offered by Civil Marriage to the heterosexual community.

**Congress further notes:**

That as it currently stands the Bill is unacceptable to the LGBT community.

**Congress recognizes:**

That the LGBT campaign is an integral part of USI and many LGBT students would like to see a national campaign on this issue.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Deputy President, the Equality Officer and the LGBT Rights Officer to work together to roll out a national campaign highlighting the issue and to lobby the government on this issue.

**Congress further mandates:**

That the Deputy President, Equality Officer and LGBT RO work with other LGBT interest groups on the Civil Marriage campaign, for example LGBT NOISE and Marriage Equality.

### 10 EQ 2 MIGRANT STUDENTS

**Congress notes:**

That Erasmus, EU and non EEA (European Economic Area) students have access to dedicated support services in third level colleges.

**Congress further notes:**

That there are clear policy guidelines on issues affecting Erasmus, EU and non EEA students with regard student fees, leave to remain in Ireland and the right to work while studying.

**Congress recognizes:**

That the same level of service and policy does not exist for migrants, children of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and/or children of same, some of whom are now completing primary and secondary education in Ireland.

**Congress believes:**

That these groups are entitled to receive a third level education in Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to investigate what government and HEI policies exist in this area and to collate the responses in a position paper accompanied by suggestions for future actions. Such a position paper should be presented to National Council prior to Congress 2011.

### 10 EQ 3 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

#### REAPPROVED 2015

**Congress notes:**

That in order to communicate with students with disabilities, the USI Equality Campaign is reliant on Disability Support Services and Access Offices in each third level campus. Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 51 - - 51 –

**Congress further notes:**

That this year there have been significant difficulties in reaching out to students with disabilities in third level colleges.

**Congress also notes:**

That these difficulties are not specific to USI and are also experienced by other organisations working in this area.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality Officer to make it a priority of 2010/2011 to design a system whereby USI Equality can connect directly with students with disabilities in third level and to seek assistance from members of Officer Board, USI staff and external organisations on how best to achieve this.

### 10 EQ 4 Communicating with Part Time Officers

**Conference notes:**

That part time officers exist in each CO who work in the area of equality

**Conference also notes:**

That these officers are elected at different times in different colleges and so it is difficult to organise a networking event at the beginning of the year

**Conference believes:**

Part time officers stand to gain a lot from being involved with the USI Equality Campaign

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to meet individually with relevant part time officers once they are elected and outline the positive benefits getting involved in USI Equality can have.

**Conference also mandates:**

The Equality Officer to maintain contact with part time officers by circulating a campaign update email once per fortnight

**Conference further mandates:**

The Equality Officer to compile a contact list for part time officers and to circulate this to Equality Working Group as early as possible in the year.

### 10 EQ 5 Negative Stereotypes in Irish Media

**Conference notes:**

That often minority groups are represented poorly in both national and local print media in Ireland.

**Conference regrets:**

That over the past 12 months there has been an increase in the number of such articles, in particular on the issue of access of third level education

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer and all members of Equality Working to respond and counteract negative images and stereotypes of minority students in the media through letters to the editor of the publication involved.

### 10 EQ 6 Students Attitude to Equality

**Conference notes:**

The recent research by the Equality & Rights Alliance into Irish attitudes on equality.

**Conference also notes:**

The research is not specific to student attitudes

**Conference believes:**

That the Equality Campaign cannot be effective in campaigning on equality until it establishes what students think about the issues involved.

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to commission a nationwide student survey on attitudes to equality in third level education and to use the results of this survey to inform the equality campaign going forward.

### 10 EQ 7 Online Campaigning

**Conference notes:**

The necessity for USI Equality to campaign through various online media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Blogging.

**Conference also notes:**

The increasing success of the current online activities of the USI Equality Campaign.

**Conference mandates:**

Equality Working Group to continue utilising online media to further the aims of the campaign.

**Conference further mandates:**

All members of Equality Working Group to write a blog on an issue relevant to the campaign at least once a month.

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to run competitions through online media in order to encourage students to be more interactive with the campaign.

### 10 EQ 8 Branding USI Equality

**Conference notes**

The success of the rebranding of the USI Equality Campaign in rejuvenating the image of the campaign among students, COs and NGOs

**Conference mandates**

The Equality Officer and Equality Working Group to continue to use the new logos and colour coding in all aspects of the Equality Campaign.

### 10 EQ 9 NUS-USI Collaboration

**Conference notes:**

That NUSUSI coordinates an equality campaign for the Northern Area

**Conference notes:**

That the structure of the NUSUSI campaign is similar to the structure of the USI Equality Campaign

**Conference believes:**

That it would be beneficial to both NUSUSI and USI if officers involved in both campaigns communicated regularly and shared ideas and experiences

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to organise one meeting per semester between the two campaigns to discuss possible collaborations and to provide support, if requested, to the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

**Conference further mandates:**

All members of Equality Working Group to keep in regular contact with counterparts working in the NUSUSI Equality Campaign

### 09 EQ 2 AHEAD

**Congress notes:**

Previous policy (08/EQ6) which mandates the President and Welfare Officer to open discussions with AHEAD with a view to working together on common areas of interests.

**Congress further notes:**

That the Equality Officer, who has the responsibility to support the autonomous disability campaign, and the Disability Rights Officer are best placed to build links with AHEAD.

**Congress acknowledges:**

The work of the Equality Officer and Disability Rights Officer this year in achieving the above aim.

**Congress further acknowledges:**

The current work being done by USI and AHEAD in relation to compiling a guide for student union officers on how best to develop policy and services for students with disabilities.

**Congress recognises:**

That in the past number of months, support services for students with disabilities as well as the ‘Fund for Students with Disabilities’ have experienced cuts due to the current economic climate.

**Congress mandates:**

The Equality and Disability Rights Officers to:

Continue to build links with AHEAD;

Work with AHEAD to develop initiatives which can counteract the current cuts to support funds for students with disabilities;

Oppose any further cuts to support services for students with disabilities;

Promote and assist the development of student societies for students with disabilities;

Work with AHEAD to organise an annual one day event for students with disabilities;

### 09 EQ 4 USI RAINBOW WEEK

**Conference notes:**

That “Rainbow Week” is not thoroughly recognised within all affiliated colleges.

**Conference also mandates:**

The LGBT RO to communicate with the Students Unions and the LGBT societies and assist in the organisation of the Rainbow Weeks to those colleges that need assistance.

# Gender Equality

### 10 GE 1 Reclaim the Night

**Conference notes:**

The success of the ‘Reclaim the Night Marches’ organised in the UK between the London Feminist Network and the National Union of Students in the UK (NUSUK) to highlight the issue of sexual violence against women.

**Conference is disappointed:**

By recent research from the Rape Crisis Network Ireland (December 2009) which outlined a poor conviction rate for crimes of rape and sexual violence in Ireland, inaccurate stereotypes of rape as well poor treatment of victims by members of An Garda Siochana.

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Officer to organise an annual ‘reclaim the night march’ for students to raise awareness of sexual violence against women in Ireland.

**Conference further mandates:**

The Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Officer to contact the Rape Crisis Network Ireland to explore possible collaborations on the issue of sexual violence against women.

### 10 GE 3 Childcare Facilities

**Conference notes:**

That access to affordable childcare is difficult in Ireland

**Conference also notes:**

That access to flexible and affordable childcare is difficult for students

**Conference is aware:**

That some third level institutions have crèches on or close to campus and that a number of places in said crèches are reserved for students

**Conference is also aware:**

That childcare/crèche subsidy schemes exist in different colleges

**Conference believes:**

That all third level institutions should provide a childcare facility for students

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer, Gender Equality Office and Mature Student Officer to lobby all relevant authorities to establish childcare facilities on all third level campuses. Such childcare facilities should include both crèche and after school care facilities and should be affordable for students. Furthermore a majority of places in these facilities should be reserved for registered students of the institution.

### 10 GE 6 Campaigning for Women

**Conference notes:**

That USI had a successful Women’s Rights Campaign in the past

**Conference also notes:**

That in recent years there has been very little policy on Women’s issues

**Conference believes:**

That there is a problem with female participation in USI

**Conferences further believes:**

That current officers could learn a lot from the experience of past female officers, particularly those who were involved in the women’s rights campaign

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer to convene a roundtable with interested ex officers to discuss how to progress womens involvement in the union.

# International Students

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### 10 IS 4 Finance for International Students

**Conference notes:**

That International Students face hefty fees for studying in Ireland

**Conference also notes:**

That there is a lack of transparency surrounding these fees and how they are costed

**Conference believes:**

That financial stress, caused by such large fees and the expense of living in Ireland, has a negative impact on the student experience for international students

**Conference mandates:**

The Equality Officer & International Students Officer to always lobby for transparent costings of all fees charged to international students and that these fees are advertised well in advance of a student arriving in Ireland. Where possible, officers should lobby for a decrease in the amount charged to international students.

# LGBT

### 10 LGBT 2 Homophobic Bullying

**Conference notes:**

That the results of the “LGBT Lives” survey (2009) show that 12 years old is the most common time for an LGBT person to come out to themselves, with 17 being the age most of them start to come out. This means most LGBT people are in secondary school while beginning their coming out process, or just starting college.

**Conference further notes:**

That over 58% of LGBT people reported homophobic bullying in their schools, and that 80% of LGBT people currently experience verbal abuse due to their LGBT identity in their day to day lives

**Conference believes:**

That LGBT students can be victims of homophobic abuse in college

**Conference mandates:**

The LGBTRO to work alongside the ISSU on a joint anti homophobic bullying campaign, covering both secondary school and college students to raise awareness of this issue

**Conference further mandates:**

The LGBTRO to work with BeLonG To on this campaign, as they have established points of contact for the area of homophobic bullying.

### 10 LGBT 4 Anti-homophobia Campaign

**Conference believes:**

It should be obvious to all students in USI colleges that homophobia will not be tolerated in any form on campus.

**Conference mandates:**

The LGBT RO to prepare information leaflets or pack for a campus-wide anti-homophobia campaign in all USI campuses on a certain day and to encourage all SUs to get involved.

# Mature Students

### 10 MS 2 Mature Students Officer

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Conference notes:**

The high increase in the number of mature students attending third level education

**Conference also notes:**

That increasing access to lifelong learning and creating diverse student populations is to be welcomed

**Conference is aware:**

That mature students have additional needs and that these are often not represented at local level in colleges

**Conference believes that:**

In order to represent the needs of mature students, each student union should have a part time mature student representative

**Conference therefore mandates:**

The Mature Students Officer to lobby local COs to create part time mature student officer positions and to assist all unions in the development of this position.

# National Affairs

## 2018 NA 1 : Coalition for Homelessness and housing policies

### Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

#### Congress notes

The Coalition For Homelessness And Housing formed in 2016 with USI becoming members in 2017.

#### Congress recognises the coalition policies are:

1. The housing and homelessness situation should be declared an  
   emergency.
2. An end to economic evictions: No loss of principal residency due to economic  
   distress.
3. Regulation of the private rented sector. Security of tenure and rent certainty.  
   Greater enforcement and inspection. Limit rent rises to a link such as the consumer price index. Public led provision of student accommodation. A charter of housing rights for all renters in the private sector (including students).
4. A local authority led emergency response to the housing crisis addressing the issue of vacant units, including the use of compulsory purchase orders and the refurbishment of existing units to meet public housing targets.
5. Public policy should aim to increase the output of public housing to an annual rate of 10,000 units per year by late 2018/early 2019 at an estimated cost of €1.8 billion per annum. At least three quarters of these must be provided by local authorities.
6. Additional capital expenditure of €1,150 million in 2018 on top of 2017’s planned €655 million provided from the fiscal space available for 2018 and additional tax measures such as the fast-tracking of the vacant site levy and by borrowing. Greater flexibility as regards the application of EU fiscal rules for investment in public housing.
7. An integrated strategy of well-planned mixed income housing provided by the local authorities on publicly owned land.
8. Redirect the billions spent on subsidising private landlords to the provision of  
    public housing while continuing and improving necessary rent assistance.
9. The development of a cost rental model as a matter of urgency. Adoption and  
    adaption of NERI’s March 2017 proposals for a European cost rental model.
10. Land zoned for housing that is owned by local authorities should be used  
     primarily to provide public housing by local authorities, instead of being made  
     available to private developers.
11. Decent pay and working conditions in the construction sector aiming for the use of unionised and direct labour.
12. Full expenditure of improved funding for Traveller accommodation.
13. Socially inclusive and energy efficient standards for public housing
14. Steps taken to inscribe the Right to Housing in the constitution.
15. An end now to emergency provision for families in bed and breakfast  
    accommodation and the provision for them of suitable public housing. Improved and expanded hostel accommodation for homeless people on the street.

#### Congress therefore adopts

The current policies (as of 23 February 2018) of the coalition, which is inclusive of student specific housing issues.

## 2018 NA 2 : Sustainability Targets and Carbon Tax

### Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

#### Congress notes:

The United Nations states that climate change is one of the major challenges of our time and adds considerable stress to our societies and to the environment. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale. Without drastic action today, adapting to these impacts in the future will be more difficult and costly.

#### Congress further notes:

Since 1991, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has published an average of one such study a year regarding Carbon taxes. All have delivered the same message: raising the tax on carbon is a crucial policy instrument to tackle climate change. In 2010 a carbon tax was introduced in Ireland. The carbon tax applies to kerosene, marked gas oil, liquid petroleum gas, fuel oil, natural gas and solid fuels.

#### Congress notes with concern:

Ireland is expected to fail to meet their targets, made in agreement with the European Union, and despite both the ESRI evidence and the lack of progress towards achieving these targets, Ireland failed to increase the carbon tax in budget 2018.

#### Congress also notes with concern:

The decision not to raise carbon tax and diesel tax substantially in recent budgets, causes great concern to where Climate Change falls as a national priority.

#### Congress believes:

With public pressure, significant progress can be made regarding achieving these national targets.

#### Congress mandates:

USI to work in partnership with appropriate campaign groups to actively lobbying government on meeting sustainability targets.

#### Congress further mandates:

The USI President to directly lobby government to increase the carbon tax in Ireland.

## 

## 2018 NA 3 : 24/7 Cardiac Care for the South East

### Proposed by Waterford Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

Waterford and the extended South East including the student population have Cardiac Cover in University Hospital Waterford Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am and 5pm.

#### Congress further notes:

The People of the South East are at a serious risk as are students with the lack of this essential facility which is currently being provided in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Galway as a 24/7 365 days a year service.

#### Congress Mandates:

The USI President and Welfare Officer to lobby the Minister for Health and any other relevant decision makers in the Government stating the absolute need for 24/7 365 Cardiac Care for the South East in UHW with the aim of this service being provided as soon as possible.

## 2018 NA 4 : Seanad Reform

### Proposed by the President of USI

#### Congress notes:

Prior to the 7th amendment, it was a constitutional requirement that three members of Seanad Éireann, be elected by the graduates of the National University of Ireland and three by the graduates of the University of Dublin (Trinity College).

#### Congress further notes:

The 7th amendment to Bunreacht na hÉireann passed by referendum on the 5th of July 1979 with a majority of 92.4%. This amendment allowed for six senators to be elected by the graduates of any institutions of higher education in any manner that might be determined by law by the Oireachtas (parliament).

#### Congress notes with concern:

That there has been no legislative change in reforming the University Constituencies since the passing of the referendum almost 40 years ago.

#### Congress believes:

That the current electoral system is elitist and is disengaged from the majority of citizens

#### Congress applauds:

The Manning report that was launched in 2015, recommending reforms to the Elections, powers and reforms of the Seanad.

#### Congress mandates:

The President to lobby the government to implement the recommendations from the Manning Report.

#### Congress further mandates:

The President to lobby for a proposed amendment to the constitution to reform the Seanad including, but not limited to, the removal of 11 seats being nominated by the Taoiseach and the stipulation that all voting be by secret postal ballot.

### 17 NA 1 Amendment to Article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann

##### Congress notes

the effect of article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann in the case of The Housing (Private Rented Dwellings) Bill referred under Article 26 to the Supreme Court that forbad the state from introducing rent controls.

##### Congress believes

that this article has had a negative and erroneous effect on public policy with regard to the right to safe and affordable housing in Ireland.

##### Congress therefore mandates as policy the position that

Article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann should be amended in order to allow for a fairer and more equitable regulation of the rental market by the Oireachtas.

### 17 NA 2 The Impact of Brexit both North and South

#### Proposed by Queen’s University Belfast Students’ Union

##### Congress recognises:

* That on 23rd June 2016, the United Kingdom voted in a referendum to leave the membership of the European Union.
* That 56% of the electorate in Northern Ireland voted to Remain in that referendum.
* That young people and students in particular voted overwhelmingly to Remain within the EU on 23rd June 2016, in Northern Ireland, and across the UK.
* That, as a result, there exists a democratic deficit between the north of Ireland and other regions.
* That due to this democratic deficit, there exists a possibility that the rights of students, and the values of the students’ movement in Northern Ireland, may be diminished, neglected or ignored during Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU.
* That there will also be a number of worrying ramifications for the Republic of Ireland.
* That there has already been a fall in the number of international students, particularly EU students, applying to study in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

##### Congress is concerned that:

* That withdrawal from the EU will have profound political, economic and social effects on our society, and on opportunities for students.
* That hugely successful initiatives for student mobility such as the Erasmus+ scheme may be severely curtailed.
* That the number of students who are from Northern Ireland and want to study in the Republic of Ireland, or vice versa, will reduce as a result of withdrawing from the EU.
* That access to healthcare via the European Health Insurance Card will be under threat.
* That the number of people from the Island of Ireland who want to access reproductive healthcare in Great Britain will now face additional barriers due to withdrawing from the EU.
* That EU nationals, including students and academics, living in the UK may be used as ‘negotiating capital’ in Brexit negotiations and their ‘right to remain’ will be threatened.
* That civic society in Northern Ireland, and the needs and interests of our society and citizens will be neglected during Brexit negotiations.
* That issues of border control and immigration in Britain will have a profound impact on the Irish border, with freedom of movement curtailed, and trade on the island hampered.

##### Congress mandates:

* The USI Officer Board to actively campaign to ensure that the rights and values of the student movement are not diminished or ignored, and are reflected and promoted, during Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU, and during any negotiation between Governments in London and Dublin.
* These rights, opportunities and values include, but are not limited to:
  + Access to EU funding and participation in EU teaching, learning, travel and research programs.
  + Freedom of movement through Europe, especially for students and academics
  + Protection of Equality Legislation and the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland.
  + The ‘right to remain’ for EU nationals living in Northern Ireland and throughout the UK.
  + Retaining the Erasmus+ Scheme
  + Access to European Healthcare
  + Retention of the Common Travel Area, and the right to unhindered free movement, across the island of Ireland
  + The USI Officer Board to engage with NUS-USI, NUSUK, ESU, and with civic society, in order to develop clear and informed policy stances on the implications of Brexit.

### 17 NA4 Car Insurance Campaign

##### Congress Notes With Concern:

The cost of car insurance claims has increased by 44% from 2012 to 2015 while insurance costs have soared by more than 70% since June 2013.

##### Congress Acknowledges:

The increase of fees, rent, cost of college materials, transport and other costs on students have made attending third-level a financial difficulty.

##### Congress Further Acknowledges:

The Cost of Insurance Committee, Chairpersoned by Minister of State Eoghan Murphy TD, has published its report containing 33 recommendations comprising 71 actions with recommendations that implementation needs to be swift in order for these recommendations to be felt for consumers.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective.  
  
Congress Further Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to join the external campaign led by taxi drivers, road hauliers, older people groups and sympathetic political parties to take action on car insurance increases.

### 17 NA 6 Sugar Tax

This will require a simple majority to pass

##### Congress Notes:

That Finance Minister Michael Noonan announced plans to introduce a sugar tax in Budget 2017

##### Congress further Notes

* That the United Kingdom is working towards an implementation of a similar tax in 2018 Congress
* A public consultation process is currently underway regarding its implementation in the Republic of Ireland

##### Congress Therefore Mandates:

That the Vice President for Welfare to engage with this public consultation process

## 16 NA 1 Electoral Commission

### Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region

##### Note that to pass into policy, this motion will require a two-thirds ‘supermajority’.

#### Congress Notes:

In Ireland there is currently no Electoral Commission.

#### Congress Further Notes:

That the establishment of an Electoral Commission was promised for the term of the 31st Dail , but wasn't established in the term of government.

#### Congress Believes:

That setting up an Electoral Commission allows for an Independent body outside government to recommend and submit strategies to improve the electoral turnout, and Voter Registration and educate on Electoral processes.

#### Congress Believes:

That it is in our Interest to see the establishment of the Electoral Commission during the term of the 32nd Dáil.

#### Congress Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship with the assistance of Officer Board to lobby members of the Oireachtas and to establish the Electoral Commission in the term of the 32nd Dail

## 16 NA 3 Non-EEA Student Visas

### Proposed by DITSU

##### Note that this motion will require a simple (50%+1) majority to pass into policy

#### Congress notes:

That thousands of students come from overseas to study in higher education in Ireland.

#### Congress further notes:

That students from outside the European Economic Area can be faced with serious problems if there are delays in their visa application and registration process.

#### Congress notes with concern:

That there are increasing reports of delays within the system due to the inability of the Department of Justice and the GNIB to process higher numbers of student applications.

#### Congress further notes:

That delays in these processes can cause international students undue stress due to lack of information on their status in the country and the education system.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The President, in conjunction with the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, to lobby the Department of Justice, Department of Education, and all other relevant bodies to ensure that such delays do not occur in the academic year 2016/17, as well as ensuring that no international student in higher education is disadvantaged by any delays that may occur.

## 

## 16 NA 4 Technological Universities Bill Legislation

### Proposed by DITSU

##### Note that this motion will require a simple (50%+1) majority to pass into policy

#### Congress Notes:

The exciting period occurring in the third level education sector at present with the establishment of Technological Universities in Ireland.

#### Congress Commends:

The Minister for Education and Skills address to USI Congress 2015, where a commitment was made for the establishment of Technological Universities in Ireland.

#### Congress Mandates:

The President and Vice President Academic and Quality Assurance to lobby the Department of Education and all relevant bodies/forums, to fulfil their commitment to the establishment of Technological Universities in Ireland. Furthermore, to lobby the Minister for Education and Skills to ensure that the TU Bill Legislation is passed through the Dail and Seanad stages with the recommended amendments contributed to date before December 2016.

## 15 NA 7 Alcohol Advertising in Sport

#### **Congress notes**

**The influence alcohol advertising in sport has on young people.**

#### **Congress notes with concern**

**In January 2015, plans to allow a legislative clause which would eventually allow for the banning of alcohol sponsorship of sports have been dropped.**

**Congress mandates**

**The Vice President Welfare to campaign with Alcohol Action Ireland for such a ban to be introduced.**

### 14 NA 1 LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

That the Living Wage is the minimum hourly rate at which one can live on without fear of poverty. Eurostat statistics show that 20.7% of the workforce receive low pay.

**Congress also notes that:**

* There is a strong campaign in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland for a living wage and that the current living wage rate in London is £8.55 (€10.25); outside of London the rate stands at £7.45 (€8.95). Over 100 high street businesses in the UK support the living wage
* In Denmark it costs an employer €39.61 for each employee per hour, while in Ireland it costs €24.57. Research also shows that business profits in Ireland have increased by 21% since 2007, at a much faster pace than anywhere else in Europe. The argument that employers can’t afford to pay a living wage should be dismissed in the context of lower-than-European-average labour costs, high increases in business profits, and the increased benefits to business of paying a living wage.

**Congress believes:**

* Students and workers have the right to be able to afford to live and not just survive.
* The introduction of a living wage would be a strong commitment to decent living in our society and enable workers to afford the basic requirements of everyday living.
* The living wage not only ensures that the employees are lifted out of poverty, it is also beneficial for the employer. We believe that a living wage improves retention rates, reduces absenteeism and produces a higher level of staff morale.

**Congress further believes:**

* That the education sector should be amongst the most progressive employers in the country.
* Education institutions and students’ unions have a civic and societal obligation to pay their staff a fair wage for a fair day’s work.
* Education institutions should commit to paying a living wage.

**Congress mandates:**

* The USI President to call for a living wage in Ireland for all of society.
* The USI Officer Board to support students’ unions who commit to paying the living wage and lobby their institutions to do the same.
* The USI President to continue to collaborate with trade unions to work in partnership for students and workers.

### 14 NA 2 ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS

**Congress notes with concern:**

The problems of Zero Hour Contracts, seeing them as exploitative, precarious and disproportionately altering the relationship between employers and employees, many of whom are students.

**Congress regrets:**

That this has additional problems in relation to families/ single parents, given the difficulties of combining Zero Hour Contracts and childcare.

**Congress mandates:**

USI to confirm its opposition to Zero Hour Contracts, and work with the trade union movements and sympathetic political parties to bring about the abolition of ZHC.

### 14 NA 4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Congress notes:**

The year on year cut backs to Public Transport funding in Ireland.

**Congress further notes:**

The constant hikes in the cost of using Public Transport with no apparent improvement of service.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The decreased availability and increased cost of accommodation for students forcing more students to commute to college.

**Congress recognises:**

The cost of public transport for students in Ireland is significantly higher than in other European countries.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and the Vice President for Welfare to lobby the relevant bodies including the Minister for Transport to provide improved student discounts on all forms of public transport, and to lobby for increased Nitelink bus services mid-week and to report to Council on both issues by September 2014.

### 14 NA 5 OPT-OUT ORGAN DONATION

**Congress notes:**

The importance of organ donation within this country in saving lives.

**Congress applauds:**

The usage of organ donation cards and the promotion of organ donation within the “Irish Donor Network”.

**Congress further applauds:**

The implementation of an “opt out scheme” for organ donation in neighboring European countries.

**Congress believes:**

That further actions should be taken to lobby for an opt out scheme to be introduced in Ireland.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

USI President and VP for Welfare to lobby relevant parties for the promotion of an opt-out scheme in relation to organ donation.

### 13 NA 1 VOTES AT 16

**Congress notes:**

Previous mandates 11 / NA 2 which has ensured USI hold regular voter registration campaigns, 11 / NA 5 which calls for a more streamlined approach towards voter registration in the form of an Electoral Commission.

**Congress further notes:**

That the voting age for all national elections and referendums in Ireland is currently 18 years old.

**Congress observes:**

The Council of Europe has called upon its 47 member states to start the process towards lowering the electoral age to the age of 16.

**Congress recognises:**

That having a student population who are participating in political decisions and the voting process can be an effective lobbying tool when interacting with public representatives.

**Congress believes:**

That lowering the voting age in Ireland to 16 years old could improve the interaction of students with the political system and could improve their engagement with society right from the time they begin in higher education.

**Congress mandates:**

The VP Equality and Citizenship to lobby for the legal voting age in Ireland to be reduced to 16 years old. They should collaborate with the European Youth Forum, Spun Out and other relevant organisations where possible and interact with the Constitutional Convention. This mandate should be completed within three years or until the voting age is lowered; whichever is reached first.

### 13 NA 7 WASTE IN PUBLIC SPENDING

**Congress notes with regret:**

The considerable waste of public monies which in many ways has categorised the country’s recent economic crash.

**Congress condemns:**

The culture of greed and excess which has prevailed in many sectors of our governance and society which allowed such waste to occur.

**Congress observes:**

The existence of State-funded taxpayer lobby groups in other countries which act to try and ensure that public money is spent in a more prudent and efficient manner.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President to call on the establishment of a similar organisation in Ireland to act in the best interests of the general taxpayer in budgetary lobbying and discussions, and for USI to have representation on such a group on behalf of young people in Irish society.

### 12 NA 1 CHILDRENS’ RIGHTS

**Congress notes:**

The absence of legislation in Ireland in relation to the protection of children.

**Congress further notes:**

The contents of the Cloyne, Ryan and Murphy Reports.

**Congress recognises:**

That we, as a society, fail to protect vulnerable children.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

USI Officerboard to actively support the proposed referendum on children’s’ rights, to work with Campaign for Children and other organisations in favour of the referendum, and to actively encourage and facilitate MOs to get involved in the campaign. This motion shall continue to be in force for the next three years or until such time as the referendum has passed.

### 12 NA 2 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT

**Congress notes:**

The Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement) imposes a moratorium on public sector recruitment and guarantees no compulsory pay cuts to public sector staff until at least 2014.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The lack of employment for graduates resulting from the recruitment freeze stipulated by the Croke Park agreement and that the public sector pay freezes have resulted in less money being available in the budgets of Educational Institutions for non-pay expenditure such as student services.

**Congress believes:**

That the Croke Park agreement has had a negative effect on students’ education and employment prospects.

**Congress mandates:**

That USI calls for the renegotiation of the Croke Park Agreement.

**Congress further mandates:**

The President to pursue a renegotiation of the Croke Park agreement at the Lobby of the Oireachtas & to propose a more student-friendly alternative which will still endeavour to respect the rights of public sector employees.

### 12 NA 3 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

**Congress recognises:**

That we as a student movement we must strive for true equality of opportunity at all levels in the Irish education system. We also recognise that whether or not a child will make it to third-level education is very often determined by the quality of their secondary education.

**Congress further recognises:**

That many potential students have not made it to third-level because they come from areas of socio-economic disadvantage, and thus cannot afford private schooling, or because the public schools in their areas are not adequate.

**Congress notes:**

The growth of grind schools and private secondary schools in Ireland in the past two decades, and that this growth of the private school sector has led to a divided student body at second-level and beyond, and has also resulted in many good public schools struggling to fill places and stay open.

**Congress further notes:**

That students attending private schools have access to an education that is to a large extent publicly-funded, but which is only accessible to those who can pay the private fees which run into the thousands each year. This means that all taxpayers are being asked to subsidise an education system that is only accessible to those children lucky enough to be born into relatively well-off families, and that this private education puts them at a great advantage in attaining higher CAO points and thus places on third-level courses.

**Congress mandates Officer Board:**

To campaign for the removing of state funding for private primary and secondary schools, and for any monies saved in this process to be ring fenced and re-invested in the wider, publicly-funded and publicly-accessible education system including primary, secondary and third level education. This should be completed within the next year.

### 12 NA 5 REFORM OF THE IRISH CONSTITUTION

**Congress notes:**

The inherently Catholic ethos of the Irish Constitution/Bunreacht na hÉireann.

**Congress further notes:**

USI policy in the areas of marriage equality and abortion.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the Catholic nature of the Constitution prohibits any legislation which may seek positive, fair and just advancement in these areas, areas in which USI has campaigned tirelessly for decades.

**Congress believes:**

That the Constitution of Ireland should be wholly secular in nature, and that no one religion deserves constitutional supremacy over all others, nor should any one religion influence the laws of the State.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Campaigns and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for a seat for USI on the soon-to-be established National Constitutional Review Committee and to make known USI’s desire for a secular Constitution, lobbying to ensure that areas such as the definition of marriage etc. are in line with USI policies. This mandate must be fulfilled prior to the national Constitutional review taking place.

### 12 NA 7 ANTI-COUNTERFEIT TRADE AGREEMENT (ACTA**)**

**Congress notes:**

The importance of copyright law and the protection of intellectual property rights and the need of the Irish government to act on this.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The lack of public discussion on the ACTA Treaty and how it would be implemented in Ireland.

**Congress further notes with concern:**

The potential impact of any legislation around ACTA on students’ work, freedom of speech and civil liberties.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The VP/Campaigns to campaign and lobby on behalf of the students of Ireland to prevent the ratification of the Anti-Counterfeit Trade Agreement and the introduction of legislation to enforce it in Ireland.

**Congress further mandates:**

The VP/Campaigns to lobby and campaign for the next three years for a wider discussion on the issue of copyright infringement and counterfeit trade prior to the Irish government putting in place any legislation in this area.

### 12 NA 8 PUBLIC & CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT EMBARGO

**Congress notes:**

The difficulties caused by the current Public & Civil Service Recruitment Embargo and the employment control framework in operation in the Higher Education Sector.

**Congress further notes:**

That Ireland has a huge problem with Graduate Unemployment and that many of our best and brightest are being forced to emigrate.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President and VP/Campaigns to lobby for a root and branch review of all areas of the public and civil service. This review would enable the Government to create a public and civil service that is appropriate for a modern Ireland. By creating a modern civil and public service the Government would be in a position to lift the embargo and recruit graduates into frontline services and other areas appropriate for a modern Ireland.

### 12 / NA 9 GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT & EMIGRATION

**Congress welcomes:**

The progress made to the date on the implementation of the USI Reigniting the Smart Economy Policy adopted at Congress 2011.

**Congress also welcomes:**

The announcement of the Job Bridge, National Internship Scheme in June 2011.

**Congress notes with grave concern:**

Recent figures that over 100 Irish people are emigrating every day. Large scale emigration has hugely negative social and economic consequences for communities across the country.

**Congress mandates:**

The President and VP Campaigns to launch a large scale campaign to force Government to tackle the problems of Graduate Unemployment & Emigration and to create the appropriate environment for job creation.

**Congress further mandates:**

* The President and VP Campaigns to lobby for the following amendments to the Job Bridge Scheme.
* A reduction in the Job Bridge criteria from 12 weeks to 4 weeks.
* The modification of the Social Welfare Code to enable employers to give a modest
* stipend to interns.
* That Job Bridge interns under the age of 25 qualify for the maximum rate of Job
* Seekers Benefit.
* Vetting of Internships on Job Bridge site.

This mandate shall expire after a period of 3 years if it is not re-approved by Congress.

### 12 NA 10 NATIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

**Congress notes:**

The findings of the Auctioneering/Estate Agency Review Group established by the Minister for Justice and Law Reform, that the existing statutory framework for the property sector in the Republic of Ireland is outdated, inappropriate and inadequate for the present day market and does not provide any ongoing official supervisory, disciplinary or consumer redress system.

**Congress further notes:**

That to address these shortcomings, the Review Group recommended the establishment of a Regulatory Authority to achieve uniformity and transparency in licensing, regulation and provision of information to the public in relation to the property sector.

**Congress understands:**

That the Minister for Justice and Law Reform has established the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA) as the agency to carry out this function.

**Congress believes:**

That this is a hugely positive step by Government to regulate the property sector. At a time where many businesses are facing liquidation, receivership, and other financial difficulties, adequate governance is required more than ever. Furthermore, the enactment of this legislation to empower this regulatory authority would provide a significant support to our members along with all tenants nationwide.

**Congress mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:**

To voice the support of the USI; before the end of the calendar year 2012, for the establishment of the National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA).

**Congress further mandates the President and Vice President for Welfare:**

To lobby the Minister for Justice and Law Reform; before the end of the calendar year 2012, to ensure the swift and secure enactment of this legislation.

### 12 NA 10 MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS

**Congress notes with concern:**

Recent figures that 1 in 7 householders are struggling to repay mortgages due to the economic crisis.

**Congress further notes:**

That many students and families across the country have to make stark choices as to whether to

pay the mortgages, pay colleges fees or simply put food on the table to provide for their families.

**Congress also notes:**

That many families are not in a position to meet mortgage repayments because they have been made redundant or have had to close their business due to the economic crisis.

At present, families are bearing the full responsibility, that is losing their homes, for what can now be described as excessive lending by financial institutions. It is estimated that 36,000 mortgages are in arrears of three months or more and that 17,000 households are receiving mortgage interest supplement.

**Congress is concerned:**

That the financial crisis being experienced by students and families across the country is resulting increased levels of stress, anxiety and mental health issues.

**Congress mandates:**

The President, VP Equality and VP Campaigns to work with external organisations to campaign and lobby the Government to introduce measures that support families in situations where they are unable to repay their mortgage and to ensure that families do not lose their homes.

### 12 NA 12 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The focus being put on producing work-ready, world-ready graduates by the 3rd Level sector.

**Congress further notes:**

The lack of clarity for many students around what graduate recruiters and employers are actively seeking in graduates

**Congress mandates:**

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer and the Campaigns Officer to roll out a nationwide campaign before June 1st 2013 with the aim to inform students on what skills make them more employable and opportunities they have to develop them.

**Congress further mandates:**

The Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Officer to investigate the feasibility of a national career guidance database/website for 3rd and 4th level students.

### 11 NA 1 ABORTION LEGISLATION

**Congress notes:**

The ruling in December 2010 by the European Court of Human Rights which said that the Irish State had violated the rights of one of the plaintiffs in the “*A, B & C v. Ireland” case.*

**Congress further notes:**

That the “Attorney General v. X” case in 1992 highlighted a lack of clarity in the constitution as it gives equality in the right to life of both the mother and the unborn child, and recommended that legislation be introduced in this regard*.*

**Congress mandates the Equality Officer:**

To campaign for, and lobby the Government to legislate for abortion in line with the “Attorney General v. X” case judgement.

### 11 NA 2 VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN

**Congress notes:**

The unusual political situation in the year 2010/2011 put USI under a lot of pressure as regards a Voter Registration Campaign in the run-up to a General Election.

**Congress believes:**

That a Voter Registration Campaign would be more feasible operationally if it was carried out at the start of the year instead of in the run up to the election.

**Congress further notes:**

That to encourage people to vote an organisation must be registered. If CO’s run a Voter Registration Campaign, it must be done through USI, who are registered.

**Congress mandates USI Officer Board:**

To run a Voter Registration Campaign every September/October, to provide help to CO’s running Voter Registration Campaigns, to make officers available on the ground to COs, and to approve all CO information etc for any Voter Registration Campaign.

### 11 NA 3 An Ghaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht

**Aithníonn an chomhdháil:**

Go bhfuil an Ghaeilge mar ábhar éigeantach don Ardteistiméireacht faoi láthair

**Aithníonn an chomhdháil ar lean:**

Go bhfuil roinnt fadhbanna ann leis an curaclam mar atá sé agus roinnt moltaí ar conas gur féidir linn é a deisiú.

**Creideann an chomhdháil go láidir:**

Gur cheart don Ghaeilge fanacht mar croí ábhar éigeantach don Ardteistiméireacht

**Aithníonn an chomhdháil le himní:**

Go mbeidh tionchar uafásach ag aon athrú ar staideas na Gaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht ar cúrsaí tríú leibhéil trí Ghaeilge agus todhchaí an teanga.

**Sainordaíonn an Comhdháil Oifigeach na Gaeilge agus Oifigeach na bhFeachtas:**

Le feachtas a chur ar bun chun Athchóiriú iomlán a bhaint amach ar curaclam na Gaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht trí í a roinnt i dhá ábhar

* 1. Teanga na Gaeilge- ábhar éigeantach le béim ar scríobh agus labhairt na Gaeilge
  2. Saíocht agus Litríocht na Gaeilge- ábhar roghnach le béim ar filíocht, litríocht agus stair na Gaeilge.

### Irish Language for the Leaving Certificate

**Congress note:**

That the Irish Language is currently a compulsory subject for the Leaving Certificate.

**Congress further notes:**

That there have been many problems with the Irish curriculum in schools and many suggestions on how to fix the current curriculum

**Congress strongly believes:**

That Irish should remain a central & compulsory subject for the Leaving Certificate.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That making the Irish language optional at Leaving Certificate level will have a disastrous impact on third level Irish language courses and the future of the language

**Congress mandates the Irish Language Officer and Campaigns Officer:**

To campaign for a revamp of the Irish language for the leaving certificate by splitting the subject into two subjects.

* 1. Irish Language- a compulsory subject with emphasis on speaking and writing the language
  2. Culture and Literature of Irish Language- an optional subject with emphasis on poetry, literature and history of the language

### 11 NA 4 GAELSCOILEANNA

**Aithníonn an Chomhdháil:**

An tábhacht atá ag Gaelscoileanna de todhchaí an teanga agus an fás ollmhór sa méid Gaelscoileanna le 20 bhliain anuas.

**Aithníonn an chomhdháil le himní:**

Go bhfuil géarghá le scoileanna nua in áiteanna áirithe agus go bhfuil éileamh ann i gcomhair Gaelscoileanna

**Aithníonn an chomhdháil ar lean le himní:**

Go bhfuil tuismitheoirí ina dhiaidh scoileanna a bhunú iad féin gan aitheantas nó airgead on rialtas.

Dá bhrí sinn sainordaíonn an chomhdháil seo an Oifigeach Oideachais agus Oifigeach na Gaeilge:

Chun stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Aire Oideachais le fáil réidh leis lánchosc atá ann faoi láthair agus le cinnte a dhéanamh go bhfuil an Ghaeilge curtha chun cinn tríd an córas oideachais ar fad

**Congress recognises:**

The importance of Gaelscoileanna to the development of the Irish language and the dramatic increase in the numbers of Gaelcoileanna in the past 20 years.

**Congress believes:**

That every Irish citizen should be given the choice to Irish-medium education.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That in certain areas there is a need for new schools urgently and a great demand for Gaelscoileanna.

**Congress further notes with concern:**

That parents have had to take matters into to their own hands and set up unrecognised privately funded schools

**Congress therefore mandates the Education Officer and the Irish Language Officer:**

To lobby the government and the Minister for Education to abolish the current embargo and to ensure the promotion of the Irish language throughout the education system.

### 11 NA 5 ROLLING REGISTER

**Congress notes:**

That the ‘door to door’ method of maintaining the electoral register currently used in Ireland

means there is little public confidence in the current method of voter registration.

**Congress further notes:**

That responsibility for compiling the electoral register lies with individual local authorities rather than a central body. While this may seem like a sensible delegation of responsibilities, in reality the opposite is true. It has been shown that the current method of voter registration allows for:

* Varying degrees of priority afforded to maintaining data;
* Wide variety of practices among registration authorities;
* Insufficient field-workers and door-to-door visits to obtain the necessary information.

**Congress believes:**

That transferring responsibility for managing the register away from the local authorities to a newly created Electoral Commission operating an individual, rolling register would greatly increase the accuracy of the electoral register. Furthermore, it would make the process of registering students in third level colleges much easier as only one authority would be involved in the registration process.

**Congress mandates the Deputy President, Education Officer and Area Officers:**

To lobby for the creation of an Electoral Commission that would facilitate an individual, rolling register to ensure that the electoral register is up to date and accurate going forward.

### 11 NA 7 JOBSEEKERS’ ALLOWANCE & WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMMES

**Congress notes:**

That from January 2011, the Jobseeker’s Allowance maximum payments are as follows:

Age 18 – 19: €100

Age 20 – 21: €100

Age 22 – 24: €144

Age 25 +: €188

**Congress notes:**

That the exceptions to reduced payments to under 25s are:

* Claimants with dependent children.
* People transferring to Jobseeker’s Allowance immediately after finishing their entitlement to Jobseeker’s Benefit.
* People transferring from Disability Allowance to Jobseeker’s Allowance.
* Where an existing Jobseeker’s Allowance claimant is assessed at the higher rate of allowance gets work but loses that job and is back on Jobseeker’s Allowance within 12 months.
* People under 25 participating in a course of education, training or Community Employment. However, when the course ends you will return to an age related JA payment, if you were getting one before you started the course.
* You were at least 20 years of age on 30 December 2009 and became unemployed on or before 30 December 2009.
* You were 18 or 19 on 30 December 2009 and you became unemployed on or before 29 April 2009.
* You are 22 to 24 and taking part in the Work Placement Programme run by FÁS.

**Congress further notes:**

The recommendations in the USI policy document “Re-Igniting the Smart Economy” include the provision of 20,000 graduate work placement places, and that the 2011 Budget included provisions for the creation of 15,000 places.

**Congress believes:**

That reducing social welfare payments purely on the basis of age is discriminatory.

That the limiting of increased payments for those taking part in the FÁS Work Placement Programme to the ages of 22-24 is discriminatory and should be extended to all under 25s as long as reduced payments for under 25s persists.

**Congress mandates:**

The President, Deputy President and Equality Officer to campaign for the abolishment of reduced payments for those on the Jobseeker’s Allowance based entirely on the recipients’ age.

And until such time as reduced payments for those on the Jobseeker’s Allowance based entirely on the recipients’ age are abolished, to campaign for the extension of increased payments to those on the FÁS Work Placement Programme to be extended to all those below 25, and to include those who have applied for the FÁS Work Placement Programme. They should also lobby and campaign for those participating in any national work placement programmes outside of FÁS to similarly be eligible for increased payments.

### 09 NA 4 Elections Campaign

**Congress applauds:**

The current USI policy on increasing the student vote.

**Congress mandates:**

The President to immediately begin lobbying all political parties with regard to student issues, specifically funding of third level education.

**Congress further mandates:**

Officer Board to prepare information regarding each party’s policies which relate to students so as to inform USI’s members.

**Congress also mandates:**

The President and Officer Board to immediately begin a campaign to improve student access to voting – through lobbying for weekend voting, on campus polling stations and re-instating the right to be registered at home and at college.

# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## NC18 IA 1 : To ​condemn ​the ​actions ​taken ​by ​the ​Government ​of ​Myanmar ​against ​the ​Rohingyan population.

### Proposed ​by: ​Carlow ​College ​Students’ ​Union

#### USI​ ​Notes:

That ​due ​to ​ongoing ​‘Clearance ​Operations’ ​in ​Burma, ​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 ​Burmese ​Government.

The ​VP ​Equality ​& ​Citzienship ​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.

## 2018 IA 1 : Graduate USA Visa

### Proposed by the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

#### Congress notes:

The popularity of the 1 Year USA Graduate Programme among Irish Graduates, which gives an opportunity to intern in the USA for 1 year without having any pre-arranged internship before travelling.

#### Congress believes:

The 1 Year USA Graduate Programme provides an excellent opportunity for Irish Graduates to gain invaluable experience in launching their careers.

#### Congress further notes:

The short timeframe graduates have to demonstrate their worth to employers, from beginning employment to requesting that employers being the sponsorship process.

#### Congress also believes:

Many participants of the programme are denied sponsorship by employers due to an insufficient amount of time to demonstrate their skills and worth.

#### Congress mandates:

The USI President to lobby the relevant Irish and US Departments (i.e. the US State Department, Department of Labour and Department of Homeland Security), to extend the one year limit to two years, if requested by a participant of the programme who is currently in employment.

## 

## 2018 IA 2 : Justice and human rights for Palestine

### Proposed by Queen’s University, Belfast Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

That the state of Israel is involved in a brutal military occupation of the Palestinian territories

The occupation is responsible for systematic, widespread and ongoing human rights abuses against the local Palestinian population, including destruction of homes, theft of land and water resources, imprisonment without trial, torture of prisoners, and construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land.

That the State of Israel is in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. The settlements have also been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and the UK government with Amnesty International stating that “Israel’s settlement policy is inherently discriminatory and has resulted in grave human rights violations including destruction of homes, forced evictions, unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions and collective punishment”.

#### Congress believes:

That Israel should end its occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law.

That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as all other peoples in the world today.

That a boycott of Israel’s entire regime of oppression, including all of the Israeli companies and institutions that are involved in its violations of international law, is a reasonable non-violent activity that can be taken to register opposition to such crimes.

That the Palestinian led BDS campaign does not target anyone or anything based on identity, but rather  based solely on complicity in denying Palestinian rights and that BDS is a strategy for effective solidarity, not a dogma or ideology and certainly not an attack upon Jewish communities or individuals.

#### Congress mandates Officer Board:

To inform MOs of the background to the situation in Israel/Palestine and to commemorate Palestine Solidarity Day, working with any relevant groups such as student societies and civil society organisations local to each of our campuses.

To lobby to divest from and terminate any contracts with companies that are complicit in the occupation of the Palestinian territories and violation of Palestinian human rights more widely

To join the global movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it ends the occupation and complies with international law.

### 17 IA1 Protection of J1 Visa Program

##### Congress notes with deep concern

the policy effects of the selection of Donald Trump by the Electoral College of the United States to be their 45th President.

##### Congress in particular notes

that Mr. Trump had indicated that he would seek to repeal the J-1 Visa programme and the impact this would have on Irish students who seek to participate in the program.

##### Congress believes

that this program has been beneficial for positive relations between the United States and Ireland and a deeper sharing of the historical relationship between Ireland and the United States.

##### Congress therefore mandates

the President to lobby the Irish Government to make the preservation and continuation of this program a diplomatic priority in their engagement with the United States.

## 15 IA1 Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

#### **Congress notes with concern:**

**the on-going negotiations between the European Union and the United States in relation to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and the potential impact that it could have on Irish higher education, democracy and wider society.  
  
Congress does not support:**

**the lowering of any EU standards in regards to the environment, food safety, animal welfare and workers’ rights.**

**In addition, Congress is especially concerned that under TTIP, the US would be allowed to export shale gas to Europe thus increasing fracking in the US and allowing US companies to challenge fracking bans in Europe under the Investor-State Dispute Settlement clause.  
  
While Congress supports the EU’s efforts in job creation we believe that TTIP jeopardises the health and wellbeing of those living in the EU and therefore call on the EU to use these negotiations to encourage the US to raise its standards rather than lowering its own.  
  
Congress affirms**

**that while it does not oppose free trade in principle, TTIP does not amount to a traditional free trade agreement but rather threatens to constitute an historic infringement upon democratic governance.  
  
Conference mandates:**

**Officer Board to campaign against TTIP and to engage with like-minded organisations in Ireland and across Europe on the matter.**

### 14 IA 1 SUPPORTING LGBT RUSSIA

**Congress is aware:**

Of USI’s proud history of campaigning for LGBT rights, including the 1993 decriminalisation of homosexuality in Ireland.

**Congress believes:**

That as a Union we have a responsibility to ensure that human rights are protected, not only for our members but also for our European and international counterparts.

**Congress is appalled:**

By the effect the of the “homosexual propaganda” law that has been introduced and implemented by the lawmakers of the Russian Federation.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the Russian LGBT community is living in conditions of extreme oppression while coping with acts of violence on a daily basis.

**Congress is disgusted:**

That the group calling themselves “Occupy Paedophilia” is allowed to attack perceived members of the LGBT community with almost complete immunity from the law.

**Congress is opposed:**

To the regime that has been imposed upon the LGBT people in the Russian Federation and conveys solidarity with those who are risking their own lives to fight against this oppressive regime.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI Equality and Citizenship Vice President to organise a repeat of the recent demonstration in front of the Russian Embassy in co-operation with other LGBT groups, calling for the repeal of this law and the protection of the Russian LGBT community from continued attacks.

**Congress further mandates:**

The USI Equality and Citizenship Vice President and the USI President to contact the Department of Foreign Affairs with a view to meeting the Minister to ask if the issue has been discussed with his Russian counterparts and if the Government of Ireland is willing to call for a repeal of the “homosexual propaganda” law. This meeting should take place by the third National Council of the year and the findings reported back to that National Council.

**Congress also mandates:**

The Equality and Citizenship Vice President to continue to work with IGLYO on this matter.

# UNION ORGANISATION

## NC18 UO 1: Road ​Traffic ​Act

### Proposed by the USI Vice President for Welfare

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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

#### 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.

## 2018 UO1 : Location of National Council

### Proposed by Galway - Mayo Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress believes:

That all MOs should have an equal chance of hosting meetings of National Council

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The President to ensure that the location of National Council, should cycle between regions, ensuring that a full cycle of the four regions must be concluded before an MO from a previous host region may reapply. A lottery system should be used if more than 1 MO from a region is interested in hosting.

#### Congress therefore deletes:

15 UO21 National Council Decentralisation

## 2018 UO2 : Constitutional Development Support for MOs

### Proposed by Trinity College Dublin Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

That all Member Organisations are governed by their constitutions.

#### Congress Recognises:

Constitutional drafting and reform is a specialist undertaking, which requires significant time and expertise.

#### Congress notes with Concern:

The lack of national infrastructure available to MOs considering Constitutional Reform.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The President to investigate the feasibility of developing a national infrastructure for Constitutional Reform for Member Organisations.

## 2018 UO3 : Union development intern

### Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

#### Congress notes

As per the union development strategy, it is the duty of USI to take lead on improving development of the local member organisations and the union as a whole.

#### Congress further notes

The union development strategy further outlines 3 phases over three years of work in this area. Currently this work is undertaken by the VP for Campaigns.

#### Congress recognises

The amount of work within union development in USI is not feasible to be looked into fully by one officer on their own.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The President to explore the possibility of hiring a union development intern to assist the VP for campaigns in implementing this strategy and to further develop the work in union development brief.

## 2018 UO4 : Sub-committees of National Council

### Proposed by IT Carlow Students’ Union

### Passed with Amendment submitted by the President of USI

#### Congress recognises

The importance of having members of National Council elected to sub-committees with specific purposes.

#### Congress notes

That these members are elected as representatives from each region to perform tasks such as but not limited to planning and evaluation. The members of National Council that are elected to sub-committees are accountable to National Council.

#### Congress further notes

That USI runs many events to improve participation from underrepresented groups at events, in elections and other initiatives.

#### Congress mandates

The President to ensure that minutes of sub-committees of National Council, including attendance registers, are made available to members of National Council.

#### Congress further mandates

USI to promote gender balance on sub-committees of National Council.

## 2018 UO5 : USI Commercial Strategy

### Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

#### Congress believes

That USI should create a Commercial Strategy for the organisation.

#### Congress also believes

The implementation of this strategy is fundamentally important to the future development of USI, in terms of meeting strategic financial targets and adding value to USI membership.

#### Congress Mandates

The President of USI to oversee the creation and implementation of a USI Commercial Strategy.

#### Congress repeals

14 AF 2, 14 AF 3

## 2018 UO6 : Access breaks at Congress

### Proposed by Dublin Institute of Technology Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

Long hours without breaks decreases attention span and productivity on Congress floor.

#### Congress further notes

That the increase in productivity from short breaks improves delegate performance and engagement.

#### Congress acknowledges:

That according to the constitution, *“no formal business shall be conducted after 10:30pm”*.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

That there must be a break each day during USI Congress between lunch and dinners. These breaks must not exceed 15 minutes.

## 2018 UO9 : Student Levies

### Proposed by Maynooth University Students’ Union

#### Congress Notes

That many MOs assist in the delivery of student levies for the HEIs.

#### Congress Notes with Concern

That sometimes promises or commitments made by HEIs in the lead up to student levy referendums are not always honoured or acted upon after the passing of referendums.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to draft a set of guidelines highlighting an indicative list of guarantees or assurances MO’s should seek and obtain from HEIs before deciding to engage in the implementation of a student levy for the HEI.

#### Congress Further Mandates

The President of USI, or a nominee of the President of USI, to collate and maintain an annual dossier of details on the current and any known proposed levy models, including but not limited to levy rate, levy lifetime, percentage contribution of levy funds to projects etc, as to keep a record of developments and changes as they occur.

## 2018 UO12 : Review of committee meeting preceding National Council

### Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

#### Congress Notes:

That there are currently 10 constitution committees that usually take place the day of, or before a meeting of National Council.

#### Congress Recognises:

The difficulty in holding each of these committee meetings in a short space without a significant number clashing.

#### Congress notes with concern:

That part-time officers, who do not attend National Council are unable to engage with these committees.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The President to review the current structure of committees preceding National Council meetings.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

The President to investigate the possibility of some of these committee meetings taking place seperate to National Council with the option of Video Conferencing.

## 2018 UO13 : Historical Record of the Mandate Manual and Policies

### Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

#### Congress notes:

That currently, the USI Mandate Manual is a live document that is constantly changing.

#### Congress Recognises:

The importance of organisational memory in USI

#### Congress Mandates:

The President to ensure that a historical record of the Mandate manual for each year is recorded and made available online.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

That historical records of all policies and strategies are recorded and made available online after Congress each year.

## 2018 UO15 : Pre Budget Submission

### Proposed by the Presidents’ Working Group

#### Congress notes:

That the Government accept submission on budget proposals each year.

#### Congress mandates:

The President to ensure that USI submit a pre-budget submission, based on mandates from congress, and that a Lobbying day is organised to discuss this submission with members of the Oireachtas. This is to take place before the Dáil’s Summer recess each year.

#### Congress therefore deletes:

**11 UO 3**

## 2018 UO16 : Gender Equality on Finance Committee

### Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

#### Congress notes

That gender balance at USI finance committee is an ongoing issue.

#### Congress believes

That USI should be a positive force for promoting the participation of our self-identifying female members at all levels.

#### Congress notes

The president nominates 4 people to finance committee; three qualified people from outside the Union, who are not members of the Union but may be serving Trustees, who can contribute by virtue of their experience, and one former President of the Union.

#### Congress mandates

The President insofar as practicable, to ensure their nominees are gender balanced.

## 2018 UO17 : Cur Chun Cinn Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann/Promotion of Irish Sign Language

### Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara  
Gur aithníodh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar tríú teanga oifigiúil i stát na hÉireann sa bhliain seo ag Dáil Éireann.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara  
Go bhfuil níos mó ná mionteanga amháin in Éirinn, agus gur cheart fáilte a chur roimh Teanga Comharthaíochta na hÉireann mar an tríú teanga oifigiúil.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil  
Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge bheith aireach ar mhionteangacha eile sa tír seo, agus gur féidir tacú leis an Teanga Comharthaíochta go héasca mar chuid d’fheachtasaíocht.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil ar  
An Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge an Teanga Comharthaíochta a thacú ina ról, agus chun ar a laghad ócáid amháin a chur ar siúl a thabharfaidh léargas ar an teanga agus deis do lucht na teanga sin a dteanga a chéiliúradh.

Congress notes  
That Irish Sign Language has been recognised as a third official language in the Irish state in this year by Dáil Éireann.

Congress further notes  
That there is more than one minority language in Ireland and that ISL should be welcomed as the third official language of the state.

Congress understands  
That Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should be mindful of other minority languages in this country, and it is possible to support ISL easily as a part of campaigning.

Therefore, Congress mandates  
That LU don Ghaeilge should support ISL in their role, and to at least organise one event that will give an overview of the language and give an opportunity to the users of the language to celebrate the language.

## 2018 UO19 : Plastic and Sustainability

### Proposed by Dublin City University Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

the growth of plastic free and plastic reduction campaigns within HEI's over the past year.   
  
Congress believes  
that it is imperative that we as a society reduce the negative impacts we have on the environment.   
  
Congress therefore adopts as policy   
our support of plastic free and plastic reduction campaigns.   
  
Congress mandates the VP Campaigns   
to create a campaign package that will incorporate plastic free and plastic reduction strategies   
and mechanisms which MO's can avail of, where they wish to support this campaign within their own HEI. 

## 2018 UO20 : Paper Cups and Sustainability

### Proposed by Dublin City University Students’ Union

#### Congress notes

that every day in Ireland 2 million disposable coffee cups end up in landfill waste.   
  
Congress believes

that this is an ordinate and avoidable level of waste.   
  
Therefor Congress calls on

the government to introduce a 20c levy on all disposable coffee cups.   
  
Congress further calls

for the revenue from this levy to be ring-fenced to support waste reduction strategies. 

## 2018 UO21 : Officer Report Transparency

### Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

That Officer report transparency is important when it comes to trusting the good work done by the Officerboard.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

Officerboard to provide their expenses claimed and annual leave taken on their officer report at each National Council.

## 2018 UO22 : An Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar Fho-Choiste- An Coiste Cultúrtha as another Subcommitee of NC

### Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Gur éirigh leis an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge Choiste Cultúrtha a thoghadh i mbliana, tar éis easpa fada.

#### Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Gur éirigh leis an Choiste sár-obair a dhéanamh agus naisc luachmhaire a chruthú idir gaeilgeoirí agus lucht suime na Gaeilge.

#### Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart an Coiste Cultúrtha a chruthú mar ‘ad-hoc Fho-Choiste’ den Chomhairle Náisiúnta agus go mbeadh na baill tofa ag an chéad Chomhairle Náisiúnta achan bliain.

#### Congress notes

That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge succeeded in electing thefirst Coiste Cultúrtha this year, after a long absence of such.

#### Congress understands

That the Coiste succeeded in doing good work and creating new links between Irish speakers and those interested in Irish.

#### Therefore, Congress mandates

That An Coiste Cultúrtha would be created as an ad-hoc subcommittee of National Council, and elected at the first National Council of the year, every year.

### 17 NC/UO 01 Strategic Review of USI

##### National Council Notes:

As the representative organisation for Students’ Unions across the country, the USI has a responsibility to operate in a way that effectively strengthens the student movement.

##### National Council Mandates:

That the President appoint a suitably qualified consultant to complete a full review of all aspects of the USI organisation and structure with a view to bringing forward proposals to strengthen the role and performance of the USI as the central voice of student organisations across the country.

The President should also instruct the consultant to obtain the views of all Students’ Unions, whether currently affiliated or not, and make such recommendations as they see fit and present their report to a specially convened general meeting to be held, at the latest, by 31st March 2018.

17 NC/UO 07 Gender Balancing in Delegations to ESU Events:  
  
National Council Notes:   
The ongoing debate at ESU Board level surrounding the participation of women at statutory events. A recent report presented in Gdansk found that women made up fewer than 35 per cent of delegates at the 70th Board Meeting in Bergen and that men commanded 80 per cent of speaking time.

National Council Further Notes:  
That the Board has long since been considering measures to incentivise female participation, including and most recently proposing to charge lower participation fees to gender-balanced delegations.   
National Council Believes:  
That USI should be a positive force for promoting the participation of our self-identifying female members at all levels.   
National Council Therefore Mandates:  
That USI delegations accompanying the international representatives to ESU statutory events (i.e. the European Students’ Convention and Board Meetings) shall be balanced for gender. The unavailability of female members shall not be a barrier to USI’s attendance of statutory event, but the international representative shall seek to ensure as balanced a delegation as possible from those willing and available to participate.

### 17 UO1 Independent Students’ Unions

##### Congress notes with concern

The creeping intrusion on students’ union democracy and independence occurring around the country.

##### Congress believes

The backbone of the student movement is for students’ unions to be allowed to democratically self-govern, and to be free from interference by outside bodies.

##### Congress further notes with concern

The attempts to censor some students’ unions, and encroach on their freedom of association.

##### Congress mandates

The President to have the Independent Students’ Union campaign as a priority campaign for the year, and to form a Committee, made up of the President and members of national council, and any external bodies that National Council see fit. This Committee is to report back to each National Council.

##### Congress further mandates

The President to undertake an annual dossier of the current situation within individual students’ unions, so as to keep a national record of developments and changes as they occur. This dossier is to occur no later than September 30th to allow for adequate time to analyse and respond to issues as they arise. The information provided within the dossier is to be kept confidential, and is only to be used as part of the Independent Students’ Union campaign.

##### Congress further mandates

The President to seek legal counsel in relation to proposing changes to Irish legislation to protect students’ union independence, and to report findings and recommendations back to both National Council and the Independent Students’ Union Committee.

### 17 UO3 USI on campus

##### Congress notes

that students should have the opportunity to see more of what USI is doing for them.

##### Congress further notes:

that this helps MO engagement when they can see that their officers are working on national issues with USI.

##### Congress mandates

that USI distributes information (via poster campaigns, social media and shoutouts) to every campus once a term with MOs to give them a national update and tell them which projects they have been doing with that MO during the year.

### 17 UO5 Employability & Personal Skills Development

##### Congress believes:

That upskilling is important alongside students’ degrees to improve employability upon graduation, in securing part-time work to fund their education and to develop their own personal skills.

##### Congress notes:

The Upskill Week run by WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS’ UNION which was then followed by similar campaigns & workshops in ITTSU and NUIGSU.

##### Congress also notes:

The on-going upskilling opportunities that institutions and SUs offer throughout the year. This includes first aid training, bar training, barista training, Safe talk training, CV workshops, Volunteering opportunities, Interview skills, restorative practices, self defence etc.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

Regional officers to create a list of resources and contacts for MOs undertaking the campaign or running workshops.

### 17 UO6 USI Policy book transparency

##### Congress Believes:

The USI Policy Book is essential in directing the work of USI and Officerboard.

##### Congress notes with concern:

That it is not always clear what motions have been completed.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The USI President to ensure an up to date Policy Book is made available online with a clear indication of mandates complete, mandates ongoing and mandates not complete.

##### Congress also mandates:

Members of Officerboard to give updates on mandates complete in their officer reports to National Council.

### 17 UO7 Utilising National Council

##### Congress Notes:

The importance of National Council in steering the work of USI and deciding interim policy.

##### Congress Believes:

That National Council is best utilised with contributions from every Member Organisation.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI president to organise training at SUT for Sabbatical Officers on how to interact with National Council.

### 17 UO10 USI and Member Organisations Entertainments Collaboration

Congress notes:  
That the Entertainments Committee is under-utilised as a forum for USI and MO's to collaborate on events such as Freshers Week, RAG Week etc.  
Congress further recognises:  
The difficulty MO's can have when organising events and negotiating with entertainment companies to book acts, negotiate fees and riders and organise theme night events. Entertainment companies can take advantage of MO's in early negotiations   
Congress recognises:  
The potential for greater collaboration between USI and MO's to book acts collectively which can reduce total event costs.  
Congress Mandates:  
The Chairperson of Entertainments Committee to present a draft a list of MO events and campaigns before SUT+.  
Congress further mandates:  
The Chairperson of Entertainments Committee to develop and share costings for acts, event hire agencies and merchandise etc for their events on/off campus for the Committee

### 17 UO11 Ents Committee Reform

##### Congress Notes:

That the Ents Committee has experienced low turnout.

##### Congress Mandates:

That the Chairperson of the Ents Group conducts a survey of former and current marketing and ents officers, including officers who may have a brief including Ents , to see what they would like the Ents Committee to be.

##### Congress Further Mandates:

The Chairperson of the Ents Group to compile the results of this survey into a terms of reference document, to be passed by National Council in June.

### 17 UO12 Regional Training Events

##### Congress Notes:

Training events for Students’ Union Officers are frequently held within the Dublin Region.

##### Congress Further Notes:

That therefore it is not always feasible for officers from other areas to attend these vital training events.

##### Congress further believes:

During the academic term it can be difficult for SU officers to find the time to travel for required training.

##### Congress Believes:

All training is important to SU officer’s roles. Therefore by making it more accessible through regional training more SU officers will likely be able to attend the training.

##### Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to ensure that when they are organising training events aside from SUT, SUT+ and other events as determined by the officer board, that they do so in each region where logistically and financially possible.

##### Congress Further Mandates:

The USI Officer Board to clarify and justify to USI National Council and/or relevant officer working groups why it is not possible to facilitate regional training events aside from SUT, SUT+ and other events as determined by the officer board in detail prior to the events being organised.

### 17 UO14 USI Calendar

##### Congress notes:

USI organise a number events over the course of the year.

##### Congress recognises:

The dates and volume of events organised by the organisation may need to be adapted from time to time.

##### Congress believes:

Students benefit from attendance at USI events.

##### Congress further believes:

If students had sufficient notice in regards to the timing and location of events, attendance at these events would be increased.

##### Congress mandates:

The USI President in conjunction with the Officer Board to develop a set calendar of USI events and activities, including the location when known/available, for their term of office

##### Congress further mandates:

The USI President to make this calendar available to Member Organisations and students via the USI Website and other mediums they feel appropriate.

### 17 UO15 Comparative Research Manual

##### Congress Recognises:

Students’ Union Officers sit on a number of boards and committees within their respective institutions.

##### Congress Notes:

Students’ Union Officers roles on these boards and committees is to represent students and to defend their rights predominantly.

##### Congress Believes:

Students’ Union Officers need at their disposal statistics and figures from other member organisations to strengthen their arguments on a number of issues, for example but not limited to library opening hours, on campus catering prices etc.

##### Congress Therefore Mandates:

The Regional officers of USI to compile together a comparative research manual following a consolation process with students and the USI National Council in terms of which areas should be covered within this manual.

### 17 UO18 Secretary for standing committees and action points

##### Congress Notes

that fluent discussion can come from standing committees of National Council.

##### Congress mandates

USI Officerboard to ensure that as part of standing orders for Committees, a secretary should be elected to take minutes and action points are created from these minutes, which track the work of these committees in an effective manner.

### 17 UO19 Election Training

##### Congress acknowledges

That each Students’ Union would hold elections to elect their officers.

##### Congress further acknowledges

That it can be difficult to get the correct information and know exactly how to run a successful campaign. It is important that students who put themselves in an election that they feel they know how to run an election.

##### Congress therefore mandates

USI Officerboard to run training which offers advice on how to run a successful election campaign.

### 17 UO23 The Governance Code

##### Congress Notes:

The Governance Code is a resource to assist community, voluntary and charity (CVC) organisations develop their overall capacity in terms of how they run their organisation and places a greater emphasis on values, accountability, transparency, probity, maintaining control, leadership and the diversity of opinions and skills.

##### Congress Further Notes:

The increasing need for better governance within organisations for the purpose of board function and for funding opportunities and development of the Union.

##### Congress Applauds:

USI committing to compliance with the Governance Code and registering as being ‘On The Journey’ in efforts to become accountable, transparent and better governed.

##### Congress Mandates:

The USI President, as CEO of the Union, to commit to complying with the Governance Code and to report to the membership of National Council on the progress of this journey at every National Council.

### 17 UO25 Policies and Submissions Made Widely Available

##### Congress Notes:

The work done by USI Officerboard in creating policy, reports, strategies and submissions on behalf of students

##### Congress Acknowledges:

That these policies, reports, strategies and submissions could be used by the media, researchers, students’ unions and other stakeholders in their own policies and submissions.

##### Congress Mandates:

That the USI President should ensure that policies, reports, strategies and submissions which are not subject to confidentiality are made available on the USI website in an easily accessible manner.

### 17 UO27 Presidents’ Training Day

##### Congress repeals

17 UO 25

##### Congress Notes

Many students’ union presidents do not have in-depth managerial, financial or HR training prior to entering into their role.

##### Congress further notes

That SUT and SUT+ are already jam-packed with modules, and that there isn’t enough time to provide adequate training in a number of areas relevant to the role of the president of an SU. These areas include, but are not limited to, HR, management, budgeting and finances.

##### Congress recognises

The USI Training Policy, and the methodology within it of assessing the needs of a group before providing training, and seeks to uphold this policy when ascertaining the additional training to be provided under the remit of this mandate.

##### Congress mandates

In line with the USI Training Policy, the USI President to facilitate a daylong training day- “Pres Day”- where training will be provided in essential managerial areas as needed through assessing the needs of the SU presidents. This Day is to occur no later than August 30th in any given year.

### 17 UO28 TU Bill Merging of Student Unions

##### Congress Notes:

The introduction of the TU Bill in Ireland may cause the need for individual SUs to merge into one larger students’ union.

##### Congress further notes:

That this is an opportunity for the USI to play a pivotal role in the creation of a new type of Students’ Union.

##### Congress mandates:

The President of USI to work with merging Students’ unions, to assist them with the formation of a Technological University Students’ Union.

##### Congress further mandates:

The President of USI to give monthly updates to USI National Council on the progress regarding the merging of Technological University Student’ Unions.

## 16 UO 1 Seanad Cultural and Educational Panel

### Proposed by BMW Committee

#### Congress notes

That the USI is not currently represented as a nominating body of the Cultural and Educational Panel of Seanad Éireann.

#### Congress recognises

The benefit of being a nominating body of this panel of Seanad Éireann would give USI additional lobbying strength, and encourage candidates to engage with USI.

#### Congress mandates

The President to apply to have USI added to the Register of Nominating Bodies of the Seanad Cultural and Educational Panel.

## 16 UO 2 Further Education Officer

### Proposed by BMW Committee

#### Congress notes

The inclusion of Further Education (FE) colleges into the USI is of a significant importance, and only lends to a stronger national Student Movement.

#### Congress understands

The various differences, and unique issues that FE Students, and their Students’ Unions/Student Councils face.

#### Congress mandates

The President to develop a feasibility study into the position of an FE Officer on the Officer Board of USI, and the role it will have in developing the role of FE Unions, Colleges, and more importantly students, in the national students’ union.

## 16 UO 4 Motion to review Dublin Region representation

### Proposed by the Dublin Regional Committee

#### Congress notes

That, under current constitutional provisions, member organisations in the Dublin region are represented to the Officer Board by a Vice President nominated the President.

#### Congress recognises

That there are over 80,000 third level students in Dublin, and eight current USI member organisations.

#### Congress regrets that

Under this arrangement, the largest region is represented by an officer who has another fulltime role on the Officer Board. While there are obvious economies of scale associated with this arrangement, it makes difficult a fully developed relationship between Officer Board and the associated MOs.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The Officer Board to review the current arrangements for the representation of the Dublin region and make recommendations as to any necessary reform to the next meeting of Congress.

Recommendations should specifically address the viability of a third fulltime regional position, both at current membership levels and considering possible changes to membership.

## 16 UO 5 USI Training Strategy

### Proposed by VP AAQA

#### Congress Adopts

The proposed USI Training Strategy.

## 16 UO 6 FE College SU participation

### Proposed by VP AAQA

#### Congress Welcomes

The nascent USI membership of a number of students’ unions from Further Education Colleges.

#### Congress Asserts

That for the national students’ union to be a truly legitimate representative for Ireland’s third level student population, many more such organisations must be assimilated into the organisation.

#### Congress recognises

That FE students’ union representatives are fulltime students, and face a number of significant challenges to participation in USI structures.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The President and the VP AAQA to request external funding from relevant bodies to support the participation of further education students within USI. This funding shall specifically be sought to cover costs such as fees for SUT, SUT+, participation in National Council and Congress, campaign materials, and related costs to both MOs and USI.

#### Congress Further Mandates

The VPAAQA to conduct an informal audit of USI structures with regards the participation of Further Education student representatives therein. Recommendations arising from this audit shall be presented to the June meeting of National Council for discussion.

#### Congress Also Mandates

The Regional Vice Presidents to actively campaign in their regions to recruit new Further Education representative organisations.

## 16 UO 7 Completion of Mandates

### Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship

#### Congress Notes

There are a number of policies within the Policy Manual that have either passed their due completion date or have been completed.

#### Congress Further Notes

It can be very difficult to follow the Policy Manual which is not good for such a large organisation that seeks to be transparent in its operation.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

When a mandate is completed it is to be noted as complete on the online version of the Policy Manual pending approval by National Council.

## 16 UO 8 USI Branding Guidelines

### Submitted by: Entertainment Committee

#### Congress Observes:

Branding identity embodies and communicates attributes that characterise the unique positioning of USI.

#### Congress Notes:

That branding guidelines therefore represents an indispensable investment in USI’s future, and like any investment it requires careful management to protect it and to allow it to grow in value. Branding guidelines ensure that all elements of identity are used in a consistent, considered and effective manner and add to the professionalism of USI.

#### Congress Further Notes:

The use of in-house graphic designers and outsourced graphic designers in designing and publishing documents and materials and the use of the USI logo by USI, students’ unions, and other relevant stakeholders.

#### Congress Mandates:

Officer Board to develop, and update when appropriate, clear branding guidelines to preserve the quality of the brand mark and to be adhered to by USI.

#### Congress Also Mandates:

Officer Board to make these branding guidelines accessible on the USI website.

## 16 UO 9 Student Summit 3 Year Strategy

### Submitted by: Entertainment Committee

#### Congress Notes:

The fundamental importance of institutional memory in establishing clarity of mission and improving the work done by USI Officer Board on long-term projects such as the Student Summit due to turnover of USI staff and officers.

#### Congress Repeals:

* (15 UO12) Student Summit

#### Congress Mandates:

The USI Officer Board member responsible for the Student Summit to liaise with USI staff to collect feedback from attendees, exhibitors, speakers, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders in order to improve the Student Summit and form recommendations for the Annual Report to be published before July 1st of every year.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

The USI Officer Board member responsible for the Student Summit to form a Strategic Plan to establish core purpose, long-term goals and measurable outcomes for the Student Summit over the next 3 years which will be reviewed and revised according to each Annual Report.

## 16 U0 10 Student Nurses and Midwives Campaign

### Submitted by: Campaigns Committee

#### Congress Welcomes:

Co-operation between the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), students’ unions, student nurses and midwives and relevant trade unions on the remuneration and treatment of student nurses and midwives while on placement.

#### Congress Notes with Concern:

The considerable problems experienced by student nurses and midwives while on placement. The issue of the grossly unfair trainee wage imposed on them. Exploitative graduate programmes, emigration, working 39 hours a week, bullying and lateral violence and burnout are emerging as other key concerns.

#### Congress Applauds:

The research done by USI Officer Board into the issues experienced by student nurses and midwives while on placement.

#### Congress Acknowledges:

From the research conducted by USI that it was found that 51.8% of student nurses and midwives feel that placement has had a negative impact on your performance in aspects of your study. 57.3% feel placement has had a negative impact on physical health while 51.9% feel placement has had a negative impact on mental health. 81.9% feel that working as a nurse or midwife led to burnout as a result of working long hours during placement. 92.5% have thought about emigrating when they qualify as a nurse or midwife. 49% have experienced bullying or harassment while on placement while 18.3% have been bullied into working longer hours while on placement. 47.9% have considered dropping out of college as a result of a negative experience while on placement.

When asked “what aspects of being a nurse and midwife would prompt you to emigrate?” 72.3% said payment was the key issue.

#### Congress Repeals:

(15 UO 16) Campaigning for Student Nurses

(14 EM 7) INMO

(15 AAQA 9) Lateral Violence

#### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to strive to work with the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) the relevant trade unions to mobilise students on a campaign on the issues of: pay, emigration, bullying and lateral violence.

#### Congress also Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to ensure that disputes, negotiations and political lobbying is inclusive of the student perspective on the issue of pay and financial support.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to work on implementing a comprehensive evidence based campaign and programme to erase the negative culture of bullying and harassment on placement by collaborating with the INMO, relevant trade unions, governmental departments, students’ unions, hospitals and higher education institutions.

## 16 UO 11 Campaigns Feedback and Reports

### Submitted by: Campaigns Committee

#### Congress Notes:

The wide range of campaigns run by the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) as directed by the USI Policy Manual and from monitoring the social and political environment.

#### Congress Further Notes:

The issue of institutional memory within USI and the need to continually improve how campaigns are planned and implemented each year. The need to close a feedback loop and investigate if campaigns are achieving their set outcomes and while also measuring their effect.

#### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to assess the impact of every campaign through modern analytic tools and to garner feedback from students’ union officers, students, partners on the campaign, other relevant stakeholders and USI Officer Board using a quantitative and/or qualitative methods for data collection.

#### Congress also Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to devise a template for writing post-campaign reports after a campaign is complete and to circulate a post-campaign report within two months of the conclusion of the campaign to members of National Council.

## 16 UO 12 Worker’s Rights Awareness Campaign

### Submitted by: Campaigns Committee

#### Congress Regrets:

That there are incidents where abuses of worker’s rights are leaving students concerned about whether they will have enough work or finances to afford attending third-level.

#### Congress Notes:

That there is a need for students to become aware of their rights as workers with the existence of schemes like JobBridge, zero-hour contracts and a changing employment landscape in Ireland. Students should have the opportunity to work enough hours to be able to afford a decent standard of living.

#### Congress Welcomes:

The SIPTU-USI Agreement, approved by the Executives of both Unions

#### Congress Further Notes:

That the knowledge and resources available from SIPTU, such as the Worker’s Rights Centre, and the Irish Congress Trade Union (ICTU) are valuable resources and partners to draw upon.

#### Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to roll-out an evidence-based Worker’s Rights Awareness Campaign for students in conjunction with SIPTU.

## 16 UO 13 USI Membership and Partnerships

### Proposed by: USI Vice President for Campaigns

#### Congress Observes:

That there are many organisations and membership organisations that share similar values and objectives as the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

#### Congress Notes:

That USI should engage with these organisations and draw on the resources that are made available through membership and partnerships such as, but not limited to: training, solidarity in campaigns, research, funding, conferences, and events.

#### Congress Applauds:

The partnership with SpunOut.ie and membership with the Irish Development Education Association (IDEA), Mental Health Reform (MHR), National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI) and The Wheel.

#### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns (who shares responsibility with the USI President for Union Development) to actively seek out organisations to which USI could become members of or partners with.

#### Congress Further Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns to review memberships and partnerships with organisations every year and to renew USI such partnerships and memberships unless directed to the contrary by National Council.

#### Congress Also Mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns with responsibility for Union Development and members of USI Officer Board to actively engage with these partnerships and membership organisations.

## 16 UO 14 USI Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy

### Proposed by USI Vice President for Campaigns

#### Congress Re-affirms:

The role of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) in empowering and enabling individual unions to better themselves, and the importance of this role in ensuring the longevity and growth of the student movement.

#### Congress Acknowledges:

Article 5.6.5 of the USI constitution “The VP/Campaigns shall have overall responsibility for the coordination of Union Development, in liaison with the President and in accordance with Schedule M.”, article 5.9.1 “The Vice President for the Southern Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/Southern) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Officer Board.” and article 5.8.1 “The Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region, (hereinafter referred to as the VP/BMW) shall be responsible for Union development and liaison in their region. They shall also be responsible for the overall direction of the work of their region in conjunction with and reporting to the Officer Board.”

#### Congress Notes

The lack, heretofore, of a comprehensive, long-term strategy for Union Development with measurable, tangible goals and guidance for USI.

#### Congress Further Notes

The importance of having a strategy in place to guide the USI Vice President for Campaigns with the responsibility for Union Development and USI Vice President for the Southern Region, USI Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region and USI President.

#### Congress Therefore Repeals

* (15 UO 22) Strategic Planning
* (15 U0 34) External Review of USI
* (15 UO 34) Championing Strong Unions
* (14 UO 12) Championing Strong Students’ Unions
* (13 UO 1) On-Campus Training and Engagement
* (13 UO 6) Institutional Memory of USI
* (13 UO 11) USI Campus Crossover Tour
* (12 UO 17) Crossover Training
* (14 UO 14) Increased Support for Part-Time Officers
* (14 UO 17) Community Engagement
* (12 UO 6) Quality Review of USI
* (12 UO 8) USI Publication
* (12 UO 9) Promoting the USI
* (12 UO 14) Communicating with Membership
* (13 UO 7) Communication with Students
* (12 UO 21) Social Media Strategy
* (12 UO 16) Online Promotion and Web Development Strategy
* (11 UO 4) Finance Guide
* (10 UO 4) Campaign History
* (15 NA 3) Relationships with Trade Unions
* (13 UO 14) Affiliations Against Austerity
* (15 UO 17) Support a Coalition of Staff and Students in 3rd Level

#### Congress Adopts

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy

#### Congress Mandates the Vice President for Campaigns with responsibility for Union Development:

To both follow the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year and to continue throughout the year.

## 16 UO 15 Student Sport and SSI

### Proposed by Athlone ITSU

#### Congress Notes

That participation in sport can play an important part in the maintenance of good mental health.

#### Congress also notes

That sport tourism is playing an important role in the recovery of Ireland as a tourist destination.

#### Congress Observes

That currently the Union of Students’ in Ireland currently does not hold a position on the board of Student Sport in Ireland (SSI) formally CUSAI, the governing authority of the majority of student sports in Ireland.

#### Congress Mandates

That the Vice President for Welfare seek a position on the board of SSI before the end of 2016.

## 16 UO 17 Democratic Review

### Proposed by the Presidents’ Committee

#### Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland makes every attempt to be as transparent and democratic as possible in its dealings.

#### Congress further notes:

Even with consistent effort procedures can sometimes be overlooked or ignored.

#### Congress mandates:

The President (who may delegate to a nominee) to establish a review group to carry out the following work:

1. Review the democratic procedures of the organisation including but not limited to:
   1. Officer Board elections
   2. Committee elections & nominations
   3. Oversight of all areas reviewed.
2. Consult with members of the reviewed committees on said committees’ operations.
3. Investigate to what extent the National Council is aware of such procedures.
4. If necessary to make a recommendation/series of recommendations to National Council on proposed reform to be subsequently submitted to Congress for debate.

## 16 UO 18 Promoting Candidates for USI

### Proposed by the Presidents’ Committee

#### Congress Notes

That all members of USI are eligible to run for election to USI Officer Board

#### Congress Further Notes

The positions on the Officer Board are predominantly sought by members of National Council and that grassroots members may not be adequately informed about the elections.

#### Congress Mandates

The Vice-President for Campaigns to work with students’ unions to ensure all members are informed of, and encouraged to participate in USI elections

## 16 UO 19 FE Representation

### Proposed by : CDCFESU

#### Congress Notes

The addition of many Further Education Colleges into the Union of Students of Ireland over the past few years.

#### Congress Applauds

Each USI Officer Board for helping to integrate the new Students Unions into the Union of Students in Ireland.

#### Congress Regrets

That with the addition of Further Education Colleges, there is no structured representation for FE Colleges.

#### Congress Mandates

Thhe USI VP for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to accept the responsibility of being a point of contact for Further Education Colleges alongside their other responsibilities.

## 16 UO 20 Campaign Roadshows

### Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU

#### Congress Recognises

That campaign roadshows can add significant value to a national campaign

#### Congress Further Recognises

That there is usually a high level of competition to host campaign roadshows

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

That members of Officer Board who are organising national campaigns featuring a roadshow shall circulate criteria for hosting the roadshow alongside the call for applications. Recognising the diverse requirements of evolving campaigns, these criteria should be bespoke to the campaign in question.

## 16 UO 21 Evaluation of USI events

### Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU

#### Congress Recognises

The importance of ongoing evaluation of USI’s activities, particularly largescale events with significant student engagement and financial cost.

#### Congress Also Recognises

The important role of feedback in improving USI campaigns and events to date. USI has demonstrated that feedback improves events when incorporated into the planning of subsequent events.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

That largescale USI events and campaigns, including but not limited to the National Campaign, SUT, SUT+, Pink Training, Women in Leadership Training, largescale voter registration drives, and lobbying campaigns, shall be evaluated within two weeks of their completion. Feedback shall be conducted by the officer(s) responsible for comparative research and the officers organising the campaign or event.

#### Congress further mandates

That a report on the feedback received and action points for its incorporation be presented by the relevant officer to campaign participants and/or event attendees within one month of the completion of the campaign or event.

## 16 UO 22 Development of resources for class reps of part-time courses

### Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU

#### Congress recognises

That a number of MOs have a significant proportion of part-time students. Part-time students can often be more difficult to engage within union structures, leaving that significant proportion of the student body underrepresented.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The VP Campaigns, under the rubric of the union development brief, to create resources for recruiting, training, and engaging part-time student representatives and distribute them to MOs before August 2016.

## 16 UO 23 Crossover Training

### Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU

#### Congress recognises

The importance of an effective crossover period in preparing newly elected officers for their role.

#### Congress also recognises

That while some effort is made to facilitate crossover at the final national council of the year, such activities are geared towards crossover in the national movement and not at local level.

#### Congress therefore mandates

The Officer Board to hold a focused crossover day for new officers before they start their term. This should be used primarily to focus local officers on their roles within their respective unions.

## 16 UO 24 Postgraduate student engagement

### Proposed by National Council ad-hoc Postgraduate Committee

#### Congress Asserts, Regretfully

That Ireland’s significant postgraduate student population is underrepresented within the national union.

#### Congress Recognises

That many postgraduate students have a significantly different relationship with their local students’ union and their institution to those relationships experienced by undergraduate students. As such, a specific approach to engage postgraduate students and its representatives is needed.

#### Congress Mandates

The VPAAQA to organise training, at least one networking event, and an online network for postgraduate representatives on an annual basis.

#### Congress Further Mandates

The VPAAQA to organise specific workshops for MO sabbatical officers on postgraduate issues and overcoming challenges to effectively representing and engaging postgraduate students.

#### Congress Also Mandates

The VP AAQA, in consultation with postgraduate students and their representatives, to develop a set of guidelines for MO engagement with postgraduate students.

## 16 **UO 25 Budgeting Training**

### Proposed by the President, USI

#### Congress notes

That Students’ Unions are often in charge of the budget of their organisation.

#### Congress Further notes

That in some cases there is little or no support for sabbatical officers in charge of the budget.

#### Congress mandates

The President to facilitate the provision of on-going support to Students’ Unions in relation to budgeting and finance including the provision of training for aforementioned issues to Presidents

## 16 UO 26 Notice of requirements before campaigns

### Proposed by IT Carlow SU

#### Congress notes

That many individual member organisations compile a lot of material for their own campaigns

#### Congress further notes

That many of these campaigns run in line with those ran by Officer BoardOfficer Board

#### Congress Mandates

That the VP Welfare, VP AAQA and VP Campaigns outline two weeks in advance, where possible, what is involved in their campaigns/roadshows and what information will be provided to member organisations as part of these campaigns to avoid unnecessary duplication.

## 16 UO 28 Students' Union Mergers

### Proposed by Cork IT SU

#### Congress Notes

The recent publication of the Technological Universities Bill and the implications this bill will have for Students' Unions who will have to merge in the future.

#### Congress Believes

Students' Union merger process will bring with them an added work-load for sabbatical officers within many SUs.

#### Congress Mandates

The USI President to nominate a member/s of Officer Board with relevant skills and expertise to liaise and support Students' Unions in regards to mergers

## 15 UO3 Students’ union staff training

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress notes:**

**The unique work that is done by Student Union staff on a daily basis in each Students’ Union in Ireland.**

#### **Congress further notes:**

**The high standard of training provided by USI for Students’ Union elected officers.**

#### **Congress mandates:**

**Officer Board provide a training programme for MO staff. The aim being to strive for best practice; enable networking; champion equality and inclusion; and create a platform for the staff to understand thus communicate the benefits and supports provided by USI.**

## 15 UO18 Student manifesto

#### SPECIAL CASE: REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021. AMENDMENTS NOTED IN STRIKETHROUGHS AS THE POLICY ADOPTED IN 2018

#### **Congress affirms:**

**That USI must seek to make solutions to core student issues part of the next Programme for Government.**

#### **Congress notes:**

**The process by which NUS and NUS-USI’s ‘#GenerationVote’ campaign sought to a) highlight the upcoming elections and the importance of students voting and b) gather student feedback on what a student general election manifesto should include.**

#### **Congress mandates:**

**The VP Campaigns to arrange for an Irish student manifesto as part of the wider national campaign.**

## 15 UO19 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress Notes:**

**The vital need for a “Casework Recording Best Practice Policy” for MO’s. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.   
  
*Congress Further Notes:*  
The invaluable information provided by casework recording for data analysis in each academic year and the dire need for MO’s to have a guideline to data recording and safe keeping.  
  
*Congress also notes:*The benefit of liaising with support services in each HEI so that we may gain a greater insight into the issues students face each academic year.   
  
*Congress mandates:*The VP for Welfare to produce a Best Practice Guideline/policy for MO’s regarding the recording of issues faced by students. Taking into extreme consideration data protection legislation and HEI data protection policies.  
  
*Congress further mandates:*The VP welfare to investigate the feasibility for MO’s to liaise with support services in each HEI to gather necessary data to analyse key student issues in each academic year.**

## 15 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021 **Congress notes:**

**The work of Officerboard goes mostly unnoticed by the wider student population.**

#### **Congress applauds:**

**Efforts made by Officerboard to increase transparency in its work over the past two years.**

#### **Congress mandates:**

**Officerboard to implement a weekly round-up of the work carried out during that week, which is to**

**include policy and Manifesto updates, be distributed to Officers, and their Class Representatives.**

### 14 UO 8 SIPTU-USI AGREEMENT

**Congress welcomes:**

The development of the SIPTU-USI Agreement, approved by the Executives of both Unions.

**Congress recognises:**

The significant benefits to students, particularly those in part-time employment, arising from the terms of the Agreement, and the tangible added value to USI membership it brings about.

**Congress believes:**

USI and SIPTU have a considerable amount of shared concerns and issues, and should work and campaign together on these areas where possible.

**Congress approves:**

The SIPTU-USI Agreement.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President to oversee the terms of the Agreement, and work to ensure their implementation.

### 13 UO 4 MOTION ON DATA PROTECTION POLICY FOR USI OFFICEBOARD AND ALL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

##### Re-adopted Congress 2016. Expires Congress 2019

**Congress notes:**

The delicate and sensitive nature of the information USI Officers and MO Officers receive and are in possession of on a daily basis including but not limited to casework details, documents held in confidence and documents of a commercially sensitive nature.

**Congress further notes:**

The need for proper guidelines so that Union officers act in accordance with various statutory obligations.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The USI President, in consultation with other USI Officers, to manage the development of a template USI ‘Data Protection Policy’ which can be adopted by all MOs.

**Congress further mandates:**

The USI President to issue the MOs the guidelines on the registration process with the Data Protection Commissioner and how best to relate the work of an SU to the same.

### 12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY

#### REAPPROVED 2015 and 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That this year USI has made a conscious effort to create an inclusive working environment to all Officers.

**Congress further notes:**

How important it is to be at the forefront of an access and inclusivity for all officers.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President to ensure that USI continues to ensure that it achieves appropriate and reasonable accommodations for all.

### 11 UO 2 CONSTITUENT ORGANISATION CONSULTATION

**Congress notes:**

The federal composition of USI.

**Congress further notes:**

That each constituent organisation is independent and autonomous.

**Congress therefore mandates Officer Board:**

To liaise and seek permission of individual Cos when asked publicly about local institutional issues.

### 11 UO 6 TRAINING FOR PROTEST STEWARDS

**Congress notes:**

That USI have organised two large student protests over the past three years.

**Congress further notes:**

That 42,000 students marched on the Education not Emigration March, which exceeded expected numbers by almost 20,000.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That the students chosen as stewards by some colleges lacked the training and cohesion to deal with those kind of numbers.

**Congress therefore Mandates Officer Board:**

USI to consult with an events management company to draft a stewarding policy suitable for all major protests and events, to be presented to National Council before August 2011.

**Congress Further mandates Officer Board:**

To ensure that this policy includes recommendations with regard to the dissemination of this training to all stewards.

### 11 UO 7 STEERING MEMBERS

**Congress notes:**

That Steering committee are very dedicated to the organisation and to its successful running. In order to ensure that there are active steering members there needs to be a proactive approach from Officer Board to encourage and foster networks with past expertise from the organisation so that institutional memory is still accessible to the organisation.

**Congress mandates the deputy president:**

To actively pursue new steering members in times of steering election and that they actively promote a network with ex USI officers.

### 10 UO 10 AREA OFFICER ROLE

**Congress recognizes:**

The difficulty for both COs and Area Officers in defining the role of the Area Officer and utilizing it to its full potential.

**Congress believes:**

That in order for the role to be successful, the onus should be on both the Officer themselves and on COs. However, this is difficult as there are no definite guidelines as to what an Area Officer‟s role is.

The following should be the minimum expected from an Area Officer:

* A minimum of one visit to each CO in between National Councils.
* A minimum of one week‟s notice to COs about this visit (unless CO requests Area Officer in a shorter period of time).
* Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail Bhliaintuil Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 30 - - 30 -
* To organise a number of bonding events throughout the year. This should be approved by all COs and ensure that all are available to attend. And if all COs cannot attend, that those not available are happy the event takes place without them.
* To assist COs whenever requested in the run up to or during campaigns.
* To organise a number of regional councils during the year - the calendar of these should be agreed on at the first Regional Council of the year.
* That when requested, the Area Officer will attend Class Councils to update class reps on what USI has been doing and what the future plans of the USI are. COs are asked to invite the Area Officers to at least two Class Councils in the year.
* To speak to the media on behalf of the region and act as the main spokesperson on issues effecting students of their relevant area.
* To provide a detailed weekly report on their activities, both to COs and the President and Deputy President.
* To assist the Deputy President in organizing any protests or rallies, which COs have requested.
* To keep Officers based in HQ informed of the issues and activities happening in their area.
* To give an adequate cross over consisting of any further advice gained from holding office to their successor outlining issues which may be ongoing in certain COs, the main issues they face as an officer that year and how best to interact with their COs.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The Area Officer to outline their role to their COs at the first regional council of the year.

### 10 UO 21 CAMPAIGN HISTORY

**Congress notes:**

USI has a long and proud tradition when it comes to running effective campaigns which gather media attention and brings our issues to national attention.

**Congress also notes:**

We rely on anecdotal memory of what photo stunts/campaign strategies have been used in the past. Often the issues are the same for example, fees, equal rights etc.

**Congress mandates:**

The Deputy President to compile a database of previous campaigns under relevant headings. By doing this, we are building on our knowledge of what USI has achieved to date. Also, we can learn from what media campaigns have worked in the past and why.

### 10 UO 26 UNION ORGANISATION

**Congress notes:**

That it is essential that each constituent organisation of USI can hold USI Officer Board to account.

**Congress further notes:**

That the current system of accountability is not adequate in ensuring that each member of

Officer Board is meeting their mandates.

**Congress believes:**

That in the same way that Higher Education Institutes should offer a quality assurance scheme to its students; USI should provide its own quality assurance scheme as part of this effort for greater accountability.

**Congress mandates:**

Officer Board to establish a system of accountability, as detailed below, as part of an effort to improve accountability and quality assurance across the organisation.

Once elected, each member of Officer Board should present the first sitting of National Council with a plan of work for the year ahead, complete with key milestones and targets and displayed on a Gantt Chart, as is the industry standard for project management. This plan of work should reflect the policies laid down in the USI Policy Manual together with the tasks implied in the officer‟s job description and these should be prioritised accordingly.

The National Council have the option to accept the proposed plan of work , or reject it in which case the officer must return to the next National Council with a new proposal.

Progress on each item against the original plan of work must then be made known to all Constituent Organisations by means of a newsletter from each member of Officer Board on a fortnightly basis.

Failure to meet these targets, within 20 percent of the overall time allocation of each item, should then result in the Officer being held to account at the next sitting of National Council, The Officer will be fully entitled to due process in line with Article 5.8 of the USI Constitution and the law of the land.

**Article 5.8 USI Constitution**

The right of the students, through their Constituent Organisation, to call to account and instruct those charge with office, within the Union, to discipline and ultimately dismiss those who fail to carry out their responsibilities**.**

# ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

### 17 NC/AF Financial Statements at Every National Council

##### National Council Notes:

Every year; the USI operates from a budget derived from the membership fees of the individual Member Organisations.

##### National Council Further Notes:

As it is student money being used, financial transparency and accountability is always a core ideal.

##### National Council Mandates:

That at every National Council financial statements showing cumulative income and expenditure from 1st July each year are presented up to the time of each meeting.

A member of Finance Committee or Officer Board will present the accounts to the MO representatives present and allow them to question and seek clarification on the accounts as presented.

### 17 AF1 USI Financial Transparency

##### Congress believes

That having clear and accessible transparency for the Union of Students in Ireland will strengthen the organisation and also allow students engage more functionally and effectively.

##### Congress Believes:

That members have a right to have easy access to such documents.

##### Congress therefore mandates:

The USI President to ensure that financial accounts are uploaded to the USI Website no more than 5 working days after being approved by Congress each year.

##### Congress Deletes:

15 AF1

## 16 AF 1 Solidarity Fund

### Proposed by the President, USI

#### **Congress notes:**

The Union of Students in Ireland has actively sought to expand its membership in recent years with a particular focus on postsecondary inclusion.

#### Congress further notes:

Participation from new unions is significantly curtailed by a lack of funding. This essentially means that certain student groups are still unrepresented despite being members of USI.

#### Congress recognises:

Solidarity is the cornerstone of unions and that every effort should be made to ensure our Union is as inclusive and engaging as possible.

#### Congress mandates:

The introduction of a solidarity fund to allow for broader participation of underfunded unions in the national movement. This fund would operate on a voluntary basis and be used to allow for engagement in key national activity such as national council, congress and other decision making or training exercises organised by the union.

#### Congress further mandates:

That the fund would only be available to unions that fulfil the following criteria:

* Have a total annual budget of less than €18,000 per year.
* Have less than two paid sabbatical officers.
* It is the view of the National Council that they are not in a position to participate in the work of the national union due to financial constraints.

#### Congress further mandates:

The introduction of a levy on Students Unions of not more than 14c per student per year to finance the fund. The contribution of individual Students’ Unions would be voluntary.

#### Congress further mandates:

Fees applied by USI for training, conferences etc be reduced, as appropriate, to allow participation in such events

#### Congress further mandates:

The President, and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to seek alternative funding for FE colleges as soon as practicable.

## 16 AF 2 Living Wage

### Proposed by the President, USI

#### Congress recognises:

The definition of the living wage as “a wage which is high enough to maintain a normal standard of living.”

#### Congress recognises:

The value of leading by example and the existing motion 14 NA 1 which outlines our comprehensive policy on the issue.

#### Congress notes:

The work undertaken by various representative groups, including USI, and some employers to ensure that workers be paid the living wage in order to maintain a decent standard of living.

#### Congress further notes:

That USI has a number of staff and officers working full time for the organisation.

#### Congress mandates:

That USI becomes a living wage employer and that Officer Board encourages other Students’ Unions to do the same.

### 14 AF 1 FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR LARGE-SCALE EVENTS

**Congress believes:**

Transparency in the financial dealings of the Union of Students in Ireland is of paramount importance.

**Congress also believes:**

That this transparency is particularly important in relation to large-scale high-cost events organised by USI.

**Congress notes with approval:**

The presentation on the finances of the USI offered by the General Manager at National Council each year and the further presentation by finance committee at congress.

**Congress asserts:**

That every effort should be made to ensure financial transparency and that Member Organisations should be entitled to input before decisions regarding the budgets of large scale events are made.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

That the President present a projected budget for large scale events, including but not limited to Pink Training, SUT, and Congress to a National Council prior to the event for discussion.

**Congress further mandates:**

That the President present an actual budget for large scale events, including but not limited to Pink Training, SUT and Congress to the first National council after the event as an item for discussion.

### 14 AF 5 COMPENSATION OF IRISH OFFICER

**Congress notes the importance of the Irish language:**

Congress further notes the effort and commitment of the VP for the Irish Language in USI.

**Congress is concerned:**

That the work of the VP for the Irish Language is uncompensated with the exception of expenses and that this is the only unpaid position on USI officer board.

**Congress recognises:**

That expenses are not paid until the end of the month and can leave the officer out of pocket or unable to do the job. In addition there is a significantly reduced level of accountability on the officer based on the fact that they are not paid.

**Congress further recognises:**

The fact that the VP for the Irish Language is likely to be based out of the main office and this is likely to be a deterrent to applicants who could not afford to take up the position.

**Congress acknowledges:**

That changing this state of affairs would require a USI constitutional amendment.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

That the USI President investigates the possibility of providing part-time pay to the VP for Irish Language.

### 13 AF 1 MOTION TO INTRODUCE INCREASED USI FINANCE COMMITTEE TRANSPARENCY

**Congress notes:**

The significant responsibility that USI Finance Committee has towards the organization and the powers it holds under the constitution including:

• The drafting of the USI Annual Budget

• Regulation of Officerboard’s terms and conditions of employment

• The setting of expense rates

**Congress further notes:**

The inadequacy of a brief annual update on USI Finances to Member Organisations.

**Congress also notes:**

The responsible decisions made by USI Finance Committee and the need to maintain confidentiality in relation to certain decisions.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

The President a quarterly update to National Council and to provide members of National Council with Agenda and Minutes of its meetings. Congress recognises that certain Agenda items and Minutes may be withheld due to being sensitive in nature.

### 13 AF 2 MOTION ON COST OF USI AFFILIATION FEES

**Congress notes:**

The dependence of USI on affiliation fees, amounting to 99.8% of the organisation’s income in 11/12.

**Congress believes:**

It is prudent for the organisation and a duty to its Member Organisations to regularly conduct a comprehensive review of affiliation fees and financial strategy.

**Congress believes**

It is equally important that students feel USI represents value for their money.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President commence a financial review of the organisation and the production of a five year financial plan to be presented to Congress 2014. This review must at a minimum:

* Review the system of charging Member Organisations a charge per student regardless of size, student numbers and other criteria taken into account by other National Student Unions.
* Seek to reduce the affiliation fees charged by USI to Students’ Unions/student members.
* Aim to reduce dependence on affiliation fees through increasing other income sources

# EMERGENCY MOTIONS

# IRISH LANGUAGE

## 2018 IL 1 : Updating of Language and Terminology – Uasdhátú Téarmaíochta agus Teanga

### Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:  
An sár-obair atá déanta ag an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le linn na bliana maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí LADTA+ go Gaeilge.

Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Deara:  
Go raibh an obair seo an-thábhachtach, agus in éineacht leis seo, rinneadh obair ag eagraíochtaí eile sa bhliain maidir le haistriúchán téarmaíochta go Gaeilge, mar shampla, téarmaíocht a bhaineann le cine.

Tuigeann An Comhdháil:  
Chun reachtaíocht a scríobh in Éirinn, caithfear í a scríobh trí mhéan na Gaeilge, agus go bhfuil an leagan Gaeilge den dlí agus den bhunreacht mar ard-leagan dóibh.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil:   
Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge obair leanúnach a dhéanamh maidir le haistriúchán na dtéarmaí atá chun cinn i gcúrsaí cothroime in Éirinn, agus gur cheart dóibh díriú isteach ar an téarmaíocht nach bhfuil mar fhócas i measc eagraíochtaí eile a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge go speisialta.

Congress Notes  
The excellent work done by USI VP for Irish Language this year regarding translating LGBTQ+ terms into Irish.

Congress further notes  
That this work was very important, and that alongside it there has been work by other bodies this year translating terminology into Irish, such as terminology related to race.

#### Congress understands

That in order for legislation to be written in Ireland, it needs to written into the Irish language, and that the supreme form of the law and constitution are the Irish Language versions.

#### Congress therefore mandates

That the VP for Irish Language work continually on translating terminology that is at the fore front of social justice issues in Ireland and that they focus on terminology that may not be the focus of other Irish Language groups.

## 2018 IL 2 : Cumas na gComhaltas maidir le toghadh Oifigeach Gaeilge- Union Capability regarding Election of IL Officers

### Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:  
Go bhfuil sár-obair curtha isteach ag na hoifigigh Ghaeilge in Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn, agus go cuireann siad go mór le hobair a gComhaltas agus le hobair Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn go hiomlán.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara  
Nach bhfuil oifigeach Gaeilge in achan Aontas/Comhaltas, agus is minic nach bhfuil easpa Oifigeach Gaeilge mar an chloch is mó sa phaidrín ag comhaltais éagsúla.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil  
Nach bhfuil sé ar chumas ag achan Aontas/Comhaltas Oifigeach Gaeilge a bheith acu go fóilleach, agus go bhfuil, i gcásanna, riachtanais níos práinní acu i gcomhthéacs na gcampas ar a bhfuil an Comhaltas ag obair (mar shampla, ní bheadh ranganna/cúrsaí Gaeilge ag achan ball-eagraíocht).

Mar sin, aisghaireann an Comhdháil  
13 G 6

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil  
Gur cheart don Leas-Uactarán don Ghaeilge tacú le grúpaí eile ar champas a bheadh in ann cuidiú leo ina n-obair: Oifigigh Chultúrtha, Oifigigh Idirnáisiúnta, agus araile. Ba cheart ról an oifigigh Gaeilge a chur chun cinn, ach caithfear tuiscint nach bhfuil toghchán an oifigigh sin ar chumas achan Comhaltas go fóill.

Congress notes  
That excellent work has been done by the Oifigigh Ghaeilge in the Union of Students in Ireland, and that they contribute greatly to the work of their unions and USI in general.

Congress further notes  
That not every Union has an Oifigeach Gaeilge, and frequently the lack of this officer is not the most urgent concern for those Unions.

Congress understands  
That not every Union has the capability to elect an Oifigeach Gaeilge yet, and that, in cases, there are more urgent needs to be addressed in the context of the campuses on which these Unions are functioning (for example, there would not be Irish classes/courses in every member organisation).

Thus, Congress repeals  
13 G 6

Therefore, Congress mandates  
That the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge should also support other groups on campus that would be able to assist them in their work: Cultural Officers, International Officers, and others. The role of an Oifigeach Gaeilge should be promoted, but it must be understood that the election of said officer is not a reality for every union yet.

## 2018 IL 3 : Scéim Teanga AMLÉ a chur i bhfeidhm – Implementation of USI Irish Language Scheme

### Rúin ón Grúpa Oibre/Motions from Irish Language Working Group

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara  
Nach bhfuil scéim leanúnach nó soiléir ag Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn maidir le cur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht faoi láthair.

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara  
Gur cheart go mbeadh scéim lárnach i bhfeidhm a thabharfaidh treoir don LU don Ghaeilge ina ról, agus a thabharfaidh leanúnachas do chur chun cinn na Gaeilge san eagraíocht ar fad.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil  
Gur doiciméad oibre é seo, agus go bhfuil na tnútháin réasúnta go leor ag an phointe seo, toisc nach bhfuil scéim teanga ag an Aontas faoi láthair, agus go gcaithfidh tógáil ar an obair seo as seo amach.

#### Mar sin, aisghaireann An Comhdháil

14.GA.3

#### Anuas air sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Ar an LU don Ghaeilge, i bpáirt leis an Uachtarán, chun cinntiú go mbeadh an scéim seo curtha i bhfeidhm san eagraíocht, agus go ndéantar athbhreithniú ar an doiciméid go bliaintiúil.

Congress notes  
That the Union of Students in Ireland does not currently have a continuous or clear scheme regarding the promotion of the Irish language within the organisation.

Congress further notes  
That it is right that there is a central scheme in operation that would direct the LU don Ghaeilge in their role, and that would give continuity to the promotion of the Irish Language in the entire organisation.

Congress understands  
That this is a working document, and that the expectations therein are reasonable at this point, since there is no scheme in operation at the minute, and that this work must be built upon in the future.

#### Thus, Congress repeals

14.GA.3

Therefore, Congress mandates  
The LU don Ghaeilge, along with the President, to certify that this scheme will be implemented in the organisation, and that this document will be reviewed on a yearly basis so that the LU don Ghaeilge can amend if needed in the future.

## 2018 IL 4 : Tuairisc ar Oideachas na Gaeilge – Report on the Education of Irish

### Rúin an LU don Ghaeilge

#### Tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe ar an fhód maidir le foghlaim agus oideachas na Gaeilge i meánscoileanna an Phoblacht na hÉireann, agus gur chuimsigh na rúin seo mórlach na rún don LU don Ghaeilge go stairiúil.

#### Anuas air sin, tugann An Comhdháil faoi deara

Go mbaineann tábhacht agus conspóid ar leith le teagasc na Gaeilge ag an dara leibhéal, le Gaelscolaíocht, agus le measúnú na teanga go ginearálta.

#### Tuigeann An Comhdháil

Go bhfuil neart polasaithe a bhaineann leis an oideachas ar an fhód, agus gur cheart tuairisc nó polasaí amháin a chruthú, ag tarraingt ar an dáta is déanaí chun polasaí sruthlíneach amháin a chur ar fáil a théann i ngleic le ceist na Gaeilge sa chóras oideachais.

#### Mar sin, sainordaíonn An Comhdháil

Ar an LU don Ghaeilge polasaí Oideachas na Gaeilge a chruthú ag cur ceist na Gaelscolaíochta, na hArdteiste, agus araile, san áireamh.

#### Congress notes

That many mandates exist regarding the learning and education of the Irish language in the secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland, and that these motions have historically encompassed many of the mandates of the Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge historically.

#### Congress further notes

That the question of Irish language education is both controversial and important at the second level, in the context of Gaelscoileanna, and with the question of assessment in general.

#### Congress understands

That many mandates related to education are currently in existence, and that it is right to produce one report or policy, drawing on the most recent data to create one streamlined policy that will deal with the question of the education of the Irish language.

#### Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to create a policy/report on the education of the Irish language, taking Gaelscolaíocht, the Leaving Certificate, etc., into account.

## 2018 IL 5 : Gaeltacht Requirement for Student Teachers

### Proposed by St Angela’s College Sligo Students’ Union

#### Congress Notes

The high cost of attending courses in the Gaeltacht combined with the difficulties student teachers face when registering with the Teaching Council. When registering with the Teaching Council, obstacles facing students are not limited to cost. Students must prove their Gaeltacht experience in order to gain a teaching council number.

#### Tugann An Comhdháil Faoi Dheara

Na deacrachtaí móra atá ann le haghaidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta agus iad ag iarraidh clarú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta. Chomh maith leis sin bíonn sé an-chostasach dóibh. Ní hamháin teoraineacha airgeadais atá i gceist. Caithfidh an mhic léinn mhúinteoireachta fianaise a léiriú  chun uimhir a fháil.

#### Congress Understands

The need for clarity on what can be described as a verifiable Gaeltacht experience. Both work and study placements undertaken in the Gaeltacht have the capacity to enhance a students’ academic and personal development.

#### Anuas ar sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi dheara

Cén sórt tréimhse Gaeltachta atá ag teastáil agus conas is féidir fianaise a thabhairt. Is féidir le tréimhse Gaeltachta cumais acadúil agus forbairt phearsanta na dalta  a fheabhsú

#### Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP for the Irish Language and the VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the Teaching Council and the Department of Education for achievable learning outcomes, clarity and increased financial support.

#### Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

An LU don Ghaeilge agus an VP AA stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar an Roinn Oideachais agus an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta chun torthaí foghlama, soiléire agus níos mó tacaíocht airgeadais.

#### This motion repeals:

15 GA 3 and 12 AA 6

## 2018 IL 6 : Inclusion of Irish in USI campaigns

### Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with amendments also moved by them

#### Congress commends:

All the work USI has done thus far on the promotion of the Irish language

#### Congress also notes:

The need for Irish to be integrated into all campaigns run by USI

#### Congress mandates:

That the Leas Uachtaran don Ghaeilge work with relevant policy officers, in so far as is possible, to strive to include the Irish language in all USI campaigns and on promotional materials including but not limited to t-shirts, posters and cups and to also include the Irish Language in themed roadshows.

## 17 IL2 Irish Language Act

##### Aithníonn an Comhdháil

Na failí atá déanta ag an bhfeidhmeannas ó thuaidh i leith an tAcht Teanga a gealladh sa bhliain 2006 mar chuid de Chomhaontú Chill Rìmhinn i gceangailt B.

##### Cáineann an Chomhdáil

Na failí atá déanta ag an bhFeidhmeanas ó Thuaidh agus na céimeanna atá glactha ag roinnt dá mbaill seasamh a thógaint in aghaidh an teanga in ainneoin go bhfuil siad ag dul i gcoinne an méad atá ó mhóramh an phobail.

##### Sainordaíonn an Chomhdáil

Don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge mar aon leis an gcuid eile den Bhord Oifigigh feachtasaíocht a dhéanamh ó Thuaidh le haghaidh Acht Teanga agus le dul i ngleic leis na failí atá déanta ag an bhFeidhmeanas i leith an tAcht Teanga a gealladh sa bhliain 2006 mar chuid de Chomhaontú Chill Rìmhinn i gceangailt B. Mar aon le comhoibriú le grupaí eile ar nós Conradh na Gaeilge agus an Dream Dearg leis an sprioc seo a bhaint amach.

##### Congress notes:

That the Executive did not fulfil the commitments made in Annex B of the St Andrews Agreements in 2006.

##### Congress condemns

That the commitments for a Language Act were not fulfilled and the steps taken by certain members of the executive to actively work against any furthering of the language, against the wishes of the majority of the population.

##### Congress mandates

The LU don Ghaeilge and Officer Board campaign for a language act in Northern Ireland working with groups like Conradh na Gaeilge and an Dream Dearg to ensure that the populations Language rights do not continue to be violated. Also to ensure that all of the commitments made  regarding the Irish Language in the St Andrews Agreement in 2006 are filled.

## 16 IL 1 Flouting of the Official Languages Act 2003

### Proposed by DCUSU

#### Congress notes

The requirement under section 9 (2) of the *Official Languages Act 2003* that public bodies are required, where a person communicates in an official language, to respond in the same language.

#### Congress believes

That this legal requirement is continuously flouted and ignored to the detriment of Irish speakers.

#### Congress mandates

An Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge and VP for Equality & Citizenship to investigate the extent to which this occurs within Irish HEIs.

#### Congress mandates

An Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge and VP for Equality & Citizenship to formulate a campaign and to report back to National Council on the progress of this campaign.

## 16 IL 2 Múineadh na Gaeilge

## 16 IL 2 Teaching of the Irish Language

### Molta ag an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

#### Aithníonn an Chomhdáil

Na fadhbanna fadbhunaithe maidir le múineadh na Gaeilge sna bunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna.

#### Aithníonn an Chomhdáil chomh maith

An easpa dul chun cinn aontaithe nó gníomhach leis na fadhbanna seo a réiteach.

#### Cáineann an Chomhdáil

An tionchar diúltach atá aige seo, toisc nach bhfuil polasaí soléir deartha, a fheabhsódh teagasc na Gaeilge, agus gur féidir le lucht na Gaeilge a thacú agus a bhrú.

#### Sainordaíonn an Chomhdáil

Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le taighde a stiúradh, i bpáirt leis na hAontais múinteoireachta, na heagraíochtaí Gaeilge , coláistí oideachais, idir dháltaí, mhúinteoirí, agus eile, agus comh-thuairisc a fhoilsiú, a leagfadh amach straitéas fórásach, cuimsitheach, agus iltaobhach i leith múineadh na Gaeilge sna bunscoileanna agus iarbhunscoileanna. Is gá é seo a dhéanamh roimh dheireadh 2016.

#### Congress notes

The long-term failures surrounding the teaching of Irish at primary and post primary level.

#### Congress further notes

The lack of a united and collaborative effort to find a solution to these failures.

#### Congress condemns

The impact that this has had, in the absence of clearly defined policy that would improve the teaching of Irish, and that the relevant Irish language and educational groups could support.

#### Congress mandates

VP for the Irish Language to direct a study, in collaboration with the relevant Irish language organisations and teachers’ unions, teacher-training colleges, between students, teachers, and others, and to publish a collaborative report, that would set out a progressive, comprehensive, and multilateral strategy regarding the teaching of Irish at primary and post primary level.

## 16 **IL 3 Measúnú na Gaeilge**

## 16 **IL 3 Assessment of Irish Language**

### Molta ag an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

#### Aithníonn an Chomhdáil

Na buntáistí ag baint leis an bhFráma Comónta Eorpach do Theangacha (CEF) trí threoirlínte soiléire a chur ar fáil maidir le cumas fhoghlaimeoirí na dteangacha san Eoraip.

#### Sainordaíonn an Chomhdáil

Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge stocaireacht a dhéanamh ar Roinn an Oideachais agus Scileanna leis na teoirlínte seo a chur i bhfeidhm maidir le measúnú ar an nGaeilge ag leibhéal iar-bhunscoile.

#### Congress notes

The advantages of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEF) in providing a guideline as to the proficiency of language learners across Europe.

#### Congress mandates

VP for the Irish Language to lobby the department of Education and Skills to implement these guidelines in relation to the examination of the Irish language at post-primary level.

## 16 IL 4 Extension of the Official Languages Act to the private sector

### Proposed by NUI Galway Students’ Union

#### Congress notes:

The bi-lingual policy of USI.

#### Congress believes:

The promotion of the Irish language by USI and Irish language bodies like Conradh na Gaeilge etc. is integral to the status of the language.

#### Congress commends:

The Irish language schemes which promote the language In public services.

#### Congress acknowledges:

That the language schemes in Wales and Canada extend to private bodies as well as the public ones.

#### Congress mandates:

The VP Irish language to lobby the Minister for the Gaeltacht to extend the remit of the Official Languages Act to private bodies as well as public ones.

## 15 GA 1 Seimineár Gaeilge/ Irish Language Seminar

#### **Aithníonn an Chomhdháil:**

**An tábhacht a bhaineann le Cumainn Ghaelacha ar dul chun cinn na Gaeilge, agus in úsáid na**

**Gaeilge i gColáistí tríú leibhéal ar fud na tíre.**

***Sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil:*Leas-Uachtarán Ghaeilge seimineár bhliantúil a heagrú, i bpáirt le heagraíochtaí eile, agus Roinn**

**na dTeangacha in Institiúidí Oideachais, agus béim speisialta a chuir in earnáil na Gaeilge, Meáin na Gaeilge, agus gníomhaíocht i saol na Gaeilge.**

#### **Congress Notes:**

***The importance that Cumann Gaelacha have in the usage, and promotion of Irish in 3rd level institutions across the country.***

#### **Congress Mandates:**

***The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual seminar, in conjunction with other organisations, and Language Departments in Educational Institutions, 3rd Level Students, with special emphasis on the Irish Language sector, Irish Language Media, and Irish Language Activism.***   
  
15 GA 4 Seachtain na Gaeilge

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021 **Congress notes**

**The importance social events have on the ability for student to practice, and use whatever Irish they have.**

#### **Congress Mandates:**

**The LU Gaeilge to organise an annual Seachtain na Gaeilge festival, in conjunction with Conradh na Gaeilge,**

### 14 G 1 JUNIOR CERTIFICATE REVIEW

**Congress notes:**

The Education Minister, Ruairí Quinn, is currently reviewing the Junior Certificate as a means of examining pre-Leaving Certificate students. All subjects are currently being assessed, and new curricula being developed.

**Congress also notes:**

The inefficiency of the Irish Language curriculum in teaching students Irish, and in particular to students in Gaeltacht areas, who are forced to learn the language in the same way as those not fluent.

**Congress mandates:**

Officer Board, in particular the LU Gaeilge and the VP AAQA, to lobby the Minister, and his Department, to introduce a two stream system of Irish subjects:

A mandatory communicational stream, and an optional literary subject to cater for more advanced students.

### 14 G 2 IRISH LANGUAGE CAMPAIGNS

**Congress notes:**

The newly ratified memorandum of association between USI and Conradh na Gaeilge, which will not only strengthen the Irish Language campaigns run buy the USI, but it will also ensure that USI will be a prominent stakeholder in Conradh na Gaeilge campaigns.

**Congress mandates:**

That the LU Gaeilge continue the Irish Language Rights campaign currently being rolled out at the moment.

### 14 G 4 MANDATE LU GAEILGE TO CONTACT NUS & NUS/USI TO BUILD A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP

**Congress notes:**

The beneficial aspects of a long-lasting relationship to be built between language officers of NUS Wales and NUS Scotland.

**Congress mandates:**

The LU Gaeilge to develop a relationship with the NUS Language Officers, with a view to developing a role for an NUS-USI Oifigeach na Gaeilge.

### 13 G 7 GAELSCOLAÍOCHT IN ÉIRINN

##### Re-adopted Congress 2016. Expires Congress 2019

**Congress recognises:**

The increase in the demand for Irish Language medium education at Primary and Secondary level.

**Congress notes:**

That the amount of Irish language medium schools currently in existence and in the plan for new schools by the department of Education and Skills does not accurately reflect the demand for Irish Language Education in Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Irish Language and USI officer to lobby the department of

Education and Skills for recognition of the increased demand for Irish Language Medium Education in all future plans for the development of new schools in Ireland.

### 12 IL 1 SUPPORT OF TEACHING THROUGH IRISH

**Congress recognises:**

The special status of the Irish Language in the National University of Ireland, Galway and also the special recognition of the language in the USI.

**Feictear don Chomhdháil seo:**

Go bhfuil meath leanúnach ag tarlú bliain i ndiaidh bliana ar líon na n-ábhar a mhúintear trí Ghaeilge ar phríomh champas Ollscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh. Anuas air sin, tá imeallú fisiciúil agus tíreolaíochta ag tarlú don Ghaeilge, tá sí á brú amach go dtí campais an Acadaimh sa Ghaeltacht agus de réir a chéile tá sí le cluinstin níos lú agus níos lú i hallaí léachta an phríomh champais. Cé go bhfuil líon mór scoláirí ag déanamh staidéir trí Ghaeilge sna campais Gaeltachta, is cúrsaí de chineál eile ar fad atá iontu siúd agus tá an teanga á ruaigeadh amach as na daonnachtaí agus na heolaíochtaí i gcampas chathair na Gaillimhe.

**Congress opposes:**

The move away from teaching through Irish on the main campus in NUIG over recent years, and furthermore the USI commits to supporting all campaign efforts to retain and restore the teaching of academic subjects through the Irish language.

**Congress notes:**

That under the 1929 University College, Galway Act NUIG has a special responsibility towards teaching in the native language. While it is no longer a requirement of the University to give priority to Irish speakers when recruiting academic staff, it is none the less required to support, promote and expand on the teaching of academic subjects through Irish.

**Congress therefore mandates**:

The USI Oifigeach na Gaeilge to campaign on this issue and to support the NUIG Irish language community and SU Oifigeach na Gaeilge in this campaign, within the next year.

**Congress furthermore mandates:**

The President to raise this concern on the board of the HEA within the next year.

# CITIZENSHIP

## 2018 CZN 1 : USI Environmental Sustainability Strategy

### Proposed by Vice President for the Southern Region

#### Congress notes:

The need for USI to have a comprehensive long-term strategy on Environmental Sustainability.

This should include, but would not be limited to, specific campaigns such as Single use straws campaign, the Conscious Cup campaign and the Student Switch Off campaign.

It should also address the issue of food waste on campuses, look at the feasibility of Environmental Officers in Students’ Unions, addressing the issue of Freshers’ bag waste, single use plastics and the use of campaign materials.

It should also lay out a plan for creating resources for Students’ Unions for example, an ‘SU Guide to making your SU and Campus more sustainable’ – which could include tenders/procurement, materials and contacts, campaigns, audits, discounts for reusable cups, applying to Green campus etc. Or other resources such as fact sheets or app

#### Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality &amp; Citizenship and the Vice President for the Southern Region with the SAVES2 coordinator and other relevant contributors to create the USI Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

#### Congress therefore repeals:

17 CZN 1, 16 CZN 3

## 2018 CZN 2 : Ending Direct Provision

### Proposed by the USI Equality & Citizenship Committee

#### Congress notes

Asylum-seekers and their children have spent years living in an institutional setting that was designed to be a short-term solution. They are accommodated by the State in residential institutions, under a reception system known as ‘Direct Provision’. Direct Provision is intended to provide for the welfare of asylum seekers and their families as they await decisions on their asylum application. The majority of asylum seekers spend over 4 years in Direct Provision waiting for their application to be processed.

#### Congress further notes

That there are thousands of children and young people currently within the system, many of them aspiring to attend a third level or further education institution in Ireland. There has been a very low uptake of the scholarships available to those in Direct Provision to attend third level.

#### Congress commends

The work of Students’ Unions around the country in raising this issue on their campuses and localities through direct action campaigns, protests, and working with campus student groups in targeting commercial operations associated with Direct Provision to condemn their complicity in the system and to educate the public and students eg. Aramark off our Campus and the USI ‘Avoca Jam’ in 2017.

#### Congress Condemns

The system of Direct Provision as it currently stands in Ireland.

#### Council therefore mandates

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the abolition of the system of Direct Provision, campaign for the end of deportations, and for the introduction of a humane reception system in line with international best practice

#### Council Further Mandates:

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the universal right to work and accessible education for those in Direct Provision.

#### Council Further mandates

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the President to campaign for the full enactment of the EU Receptions Conditions Directive.

## 2018 CZN 3 : Support the 2018 Civil Society Repeal Campaign

### Proposed by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

#### Congress commends

The work of Students’ Unions around Ireland as ‘Students for Choice’, and the lobbying effort thus far for an early referendum date in 2018, and to prepare students for the upcoming referendum in the Republic of Ireland.

#### Congress notes

USI’s membership of the coalition to repeal the 8th amendment and the national women’s council of Ireland, and the USI mandate to support the goals of the Abortion Rights Campaign, and the strategy for referendum laid out in the USI Students for Choice strategy.

#### Congress further notes

The need for USI to ensure that the voices of minority communities affected by the 8th amendment, including students, transgender and non-binary people, as well as migrants in Ireland, are to the fore of the public debate ahead of the referendum.

#### Congress supports

The civil society campaign led by the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment, the National Women’s Council of Ireland, and the Abortion Rights campaign.

#### Congress mandates

USI to support the National Campaign, and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship and Vice President for Campaigns to further the successful development of ‘USI Students for Choice’ as the leading national voice for students during the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment.

## 2018 CZN 4 : Voter Registration and Reform

### Proposed by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

#### Congress recognises

There are several mandates regarding Voter Registration as part of the policy book.

#### Congress notes

A strategy covering voter registration and reform would be more efficient for a USI officers work, and would comprehensively deal with the topic, making the process of lobbying on the content easier.

#### Congress adopts

The Voter Registration and Reform Position Paper.

#### Congress mandates

The President and the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby the Department of  Housing, Planning and Local Government based on the USI Position Paper.

#### Congress therefore deletes

12 CZN 4 Voting Rights for Citizens Living Abroad

15 CZN 8 Voter Registration System Reform

15 CZN 1 Lobby for 3rd Level Centre Polling Stations

14 CZN 2 SERD

## 2018 CZN 5 : Places of Sanctuary

### Proposed by National University of Ireland, Galway Students’ Union with an amendment also moved by them.

#### Congress notes:

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is a network of groups in towns, cities, local communities and third level institutions which share the objectives of promoting the integration, inclusion and welfare of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, by encouraging every sector of society to make a practical commitment to becoming places of welcome and safety.

#### Congress further notes

Higher Education institutions play a key role in welcoming students from different diverse backgrounds, and creating inclusive and understanding communities.

#### Congress recognises:

Many Universities and ITs have been awarded places of sanctuary/ University of Sanctuary status.

#### Congress therefore mandates:

The VP E&Q to disseminate information on the places of sanctuary initiative to MOs, and encourage MOs to apply for status where possible.

## 2018 CZN 6 : International Student Visa

### Proposed by IT Tallaght, Dublin Students’ Union

#### Congress Notes:

That international students have to get a visa every year regardless of the length of their academic tenure.

#### Congress Further Notes:

That international students studying in other countries such as the United Kingdom are given student visas for the full term of their academic tenure as opposed to an annual renewed visa.

#### Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and Vice President for Academic Affairs lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau to provide international students in Ireland with visas that last the duration of their period of study under the course they applied to.

## 16 CZN 2 Students’ Unions Multicultural Festival

### Proposed by DITSU

#### Congress Notes:

That Ireland has become far more diverse and multicultural in the last 20 years.

#### Congress Further Notes:

That this promotes recognition, understanding and acceptance of people who come from different cultural backgrounds.

#### Congress Further Notes:

The importance of celebrating the many different cultures which have had a positive impact on Irish Society.

#### Congress Therefore Mandates:

That the VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Campaigns, working with all the Equality Officers and/or Welfare Officers and the many different multicultural groups, institutions and organisations in Ireland to run an annual Students’ Unions Multicultural Festival which celebrates these many different cultures, and promotes the excellent opportunities available within all Students’ Unions.

## 15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

#### **Congress notes**

**That General Election will happen in the next 18 months with the likelihood of a new Government.**

#### **Congress also notes**

**This is an opportunity for USI to lobby and assure students’ interests are provided for in the next program for Government**

#### **Congress therefore mandates**

**The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write ‘the Student Manifesto’ to highlight USI’s key demands from political parties.**

#### **Congress also mandates**

**The VP for Campaigns, in conjunction with the USI President, to write ‘the Student Guide to the General Election’ which will inform the general student body on the election relevant to student issues and interests.**

### 14 CZN 3 POLITICAL REFORM

**Congress adopts:**

As USI policy the 2014 ‘Free Our Voice’ political reform document.

**Congress mandates:**

The USI President, USI Vice-President for Campaigns and the USI Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to use the ‘Free Our Voice’ policies to lobby the Government for political reform.

### 13 CS 1 WORKING WITH VOLUNTEER IRELAND

**Congress notes:**

That the Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship has built a relationship and worked with Volunteer Ireland this year.

**Congress believes:**

That both USI and Volunteer Ireland have a lot to benefit from working together to promote and encourage student volunteering.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to continue engaging and working with Volunteer Ireland to promote and encourage student volunteering in higher.

### 13 CS 2 YOUNG PEOPLE, CITIZENSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT

**Congress welcomes:**

President Michael D. Higgins’ ‘Being Young and Irish’ seminar and recognises the importance and positive impact that can result from programs that involve citizen engagement.

**Congress notes with concern:**

The low level of voter turnout in Ireland, particularly amongst young people, and the importance of ensuring that we have a population that is engaged with and participating in our democracy.

**Congress acknowledges:**

The benefits that greater citizen engagement can have on government and the wider society, with specific emphasis on improving voter turnout, particularly amongst the young people of Ireland.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for the extension of such programmes through that focus on engaging with the youth of Ireland and for Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE) to be part of a reformed Leaving Certificate to encourage a sense of citizenship in young people.

**Congress also mandates**

The Vice President for Campaigns to roll out an effective voter registration campaign nationwide by December 2013.

### 13 CS 3 TASKFORCE VOLUNTEERING AND CITIZENSHIP

**Congress welcomes**

The increased participation in the Equality & Citizenship Working Group which has been noted

at National Council over the past year, and commends efforts which have been made to achieve this.

**Congress recognises:**

The importance of structuring USI’s activities in the area of citizenship, and the difficulties involved for many officers in continuing to engage with this area in between National Councils when it is not a central focus of their brief.

**Congress notes:**

The outstanding work which has been done in recent years by USI Taskforces in developing policy and campaigns, particularly in the areas of Graduate Employment and Electoral Law Reform.

**Congress therefore mandates:**

That a USI Taskforce on Volunteering and Citizenship be established, to be chaired by the Vice-President for Equality & Citizenship. This is to be completed before September 2013.

The membership of this Taskforce should consist of:-

USI President

USI VP for Campaigns

USI VP for Equality & Citizenship

All Regional Vice-Presidents

The NUS-USI President

4 members of National Council

1 external member as agreed by National Council

The areas the Taskforce should focus on should include, but not be exclusive to, the following-

* Fundraising for USI National Charity;
* Anti-Social Behaviour;
* Community Engagement;
* Student Participation Awards;
* Voter Registration;
* Student Volunteering

### 12 CZN 2 STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

#### REAPPROVED 2018 – UP FOR RENEWAL 2021

**Congress notes:**

That in order to help fund their education, many students take up a part time job.

**Congress welcomes:**

The decision to reverse the cut to the minimum wage, which targeted students in part time jobs who are already struggling financially.

**Congress notes with concern:**

That in many of these jobs, trade union membership is absent and in some places discouraged. Furthermore, many students are unaware of what their rights and entitlements are in relation to time off, payment and hours.

**Congress mandates:**

The Vice President of Equality and Citizenship to better inform students of their rights in the workplace by providing information that is set out by the LRC, NERA and Employment legislation. This mandate should be completed within the first quarter of the Academic Year.