



Policy Manual February 2018

Errors and Omissions Excepted

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. Policies adopted at legacy conferences and bodies have a life of five years and will be available for extension for a further three years at Congress 2016.

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.

At the 2016 Congress, a number of policies were ‘referred back’ to the May National Council. These may become interim policies, but are not interim policies at the time of writing. These are highlighted in the document, and caution should be used in seeking to apply these.

Contents

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & QUALITY ASSURANCE.....	20
17 NC/AA 05 Early Education and Carers Campaign	20
17 AA1 Refugee Access to Education.....	21
17 AA2 Fees Sanctions	21
17 AA3 Borrowing model of IOTs.....	22
17 AA4 Student Participation in Governance	22
17 AA5 National Student Charter.....	23
17 AA6 Class Rep Best Practice	24
17 AA7 Class Rep Accreditation	24
17 AA8 Multi-campus support	25
17 AA10 Shared Feedback Standards	25
17 AA11 Motion on residency criteria for returning emigrants	25
16 AAQA 1 BTEA Reform Paper	26
16 AAQA 2 Academic Calendar Committee	26
16 AAQA 3 Motion to call for a state agency to support student partnership	27
16 AAQA 4 Non-EU fee regulation	28
16 AAQA 5 Casualisation of labour amongst Postgraduate research students	28
16 AAQA 6 Postgraduate Masters in Education supports	29
16 AAQA 8 Release of repeat exam results before the academic year starts	29
2015 Emergency Motions	30

15 EM AAQA 1	NCAD	30
15 EM AAQA 2	ST. ANGELA’S DEVELOPMENT	30
15 AAQA 1	Academic Teaching Staff Annual Leave and the Examination and Examination Appeals Process.....	30
15 AAQA 2	Investment in Education	31
15 AAQA 4	Students outside the grant threshold: Carried	32
15 AAQA 5	Universal fee payment dates	32
15 AAQA 6	Irish water & the grant	32
15 AAQA 7	Technological university supports	33
15 AAQA 8	Student Governance	33
15 AAQA 9	Lateral Violence	33
15 AAQA 10	Cross-border student mobility.....	34
14 AAQA 1	USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY	34
14 AAQA 2	ALTERNATIVE ADMISSIONS	35
14 AAQA 3	CONSULTATION ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE STUDENT CONTRIBUTION CHARGE	36
14 AAQA 9	USI PARTICIPATION IN ESU	36
14 AAQA 10	THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION	37
14 AAQA 12	FEEs FOR STUDENT APPRENTICES	38
14 AAQA 14	SUSI SUPPORT FOR YOUNGER INDEPENDENT STUDENTS.....	38
13 AAQA 1	ACCREDITATION FOR PARTICIPATION	39
13 AAQA 2	STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON STUDENT UNIVERSAL SUPPORT IRELAND .	40
13 AAQA 3	STUDENT CONTRIBUTION PAYMENT SCHEME	40
13 AAQA 4	MIGRANT EDUCATION ACCESS.....	41
13 AAQA 5	COLLABORATIONS WITHIN ALLIANCES AND REGIONAL CLUSTERS.....	41
13 AAQA 6	GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY	42
13 AAQA 7	STUDENT RETENTION	42
13 AAQA 8	STUDENTS RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS	43
13 AAQA 9	STRUCTURE OF WORK PLACEMENT ELEMENTS OF HEI PROGRAMS AND THEIR USE IN LABOUR ACITIVATION SCHEMES.....	43

13 AAQA 10	REVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR TU DESIGNATION.....	44
13 AAQA 11	STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES.....	45
13 AAQA 12	UNPAID INTERNSHIPS.....	46
12 AA 1	TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY STATUS.....	47
12 AA 2	ESTABLISHMENT OF AGENCY FOR STUDENT TRAINING IN QA	48
12 AA 3	GRANT CAMPAIGN	49
12 AA 4	TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES.....	49
12 AA 5	CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LECTURING STANDARDS IN HEI'S.....	50
12 AA 6	RE-INSTITUTION OF GAELTACHT GRANT FOR TEACHERS.....	50
12 AA 7	GRANT REFORM (ESTRANGED PARENTS).....	51
12 AA 8	MERGING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.....	51
12 AA 9	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEA REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON STUDENT CONTRIBUTION.....	52
11 ED 2	THE HUNT REPORT	53
11 ED 3	STUDENT CONTRIBUTION CHARGE	54
11 ED 4	SUPPORT FUNDS FOR PART-TIME STUDENTS	54
11 ED 5	ECTS HARMONISATION	54
11 ED 6	EXAM REGULATIONS	55
11 ED 8	PUBLIC SECTOR MORATORIUM.....	55
11 ED 9	GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT	56
11 ED 10	EFFECT OF RECESSION	56
11 ED 12	CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRANGEGORMAN CAMPUS 57	
11 ED 17	FUNDING FOR MATURE STUDENTS.....	57
11 ED 18	MATHEMATICS BONUS POINTS.....	58
11 ED 19	MAINTENANCE GRANTS 2	58
11 ED 20	PRIVATE SCHOOLS	59
10 ED 4	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	60
10 ED 5	LEGAL PROFESSION.....	61
10 ED 7	STUDENT FUNDING	61

10 ED 8	BTEA CAMPAIGN	62
10 ED 9	MEETING FEEDBACK	62
10 ED 11	APPRENTICES	63
10 ED 12	BUDGETS.....	63
09 ED 1	TUITION FEES	64
09 ED 2	STUDENT LOANS/GRADUATE TAX	65
09 ED 11	BOLOGNA PROCESS	67
09 ED 13	EQUITY OF ACCESS.....	70
09 ED 15	QUALITY ASSURANCE	71
09 ED 18	POST GRADUATE WORKING GROUP	74
09 ED 25	POSTGRADUATE WORK PLACEMENTS	75
09 ED 28	POSTGRADUATE CAMPAIGN	75
WELFARE		76
17 WEL EM 3	Proposed Qmark for good employment practices in the hospitality sector	76
17 WEL 1	Age Threshold for Cervical Cancer Checks	77
17 WEL 3	Dealing with students in distress.....	77
17 WEL 7	Rental Restrictions for HEI Owned Campus Accommodations'	78
17 WEL 8	Consent classes.....	79
17 WEL 9	Gambling Control Bill 2013.....	79
17 WEL 10	Training for Officers dealing with students with mental illness or disability	80
17 WEL 11	Accommodation Strategy	80
17 WEL 12	Public Health (Alcohol) Bill.....	81
17 WEL 13	USI Health Promoting Strategy:.....	81
17 WEL14	Cervical Cancer Awareness.....	82
17 WEL 15	Student Survey on Perceptions of Consent	83
17 WEL 16	Student Assistant Fund & SUSI Recipients.....	83
17 WEL 17	Key Welfare Campaigns Directory	84
17 WEL 18	PrEP Availability in Ireland	84
17 WEL19	Combating Cyberbullying in Third Level	85

17 WEL 20	Road Safety	85
17 WEL 21	Student Bereavement Support	86
17 WEL 22	Social Inclusion Campaign	87
17 WEL 24	Additional Opportunities Available to Post Second Level	87
17 WEL 25	Personal Safety Campaign during Freshers' Week	88
17 WEL 26	Drug Testing Kits: Awareness and Promotion	88
17 WEL 27	Stim Room for ASD students	89
16 WEL 1	Drug Testing Kits	89
16 WEL 2	Amend grant reform document	90
16 WEL 3	USI Financial Representation Policy	90
16 WEL 4	Support for student teachers in primary education	90
16 WEL 6	USI Student Accommodation Strategy:	90
16 WEL 8	Organ Donor Cards	91
16 WEL 11	Health Promotion Week	92
16 WEL 12	Drug and Harm Reduction Awareness Campaign	92
16 WEL 13	Gambling Awareness Campaign & Protocol	93
16 WEL 14	Bereavement	93
16 WEL 15	Migration free fees residency criterion	93
16 WEL 17	Student Status and Department of Social Protection	94
16 WEL 18	Student Personal Safety Research	95
2015 EMERGENCY MOTIONS	95
15 EM WEL 1	Drinks Campaign	95
15 WE2	Student assistance fund	96
15 WE 3	Consent	96
15 WE 4	Anti-Bullying Policy	97
15 WE 9	Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance Week	97
15 WE 10	Update USI Physical Health Strategy	97
15 WE 12	Motion to provide training and contacts to deal with issues regarding BTEA	98
15 WE 13	Mental Health Awareness	98

15 WE 14 Barrier Free Access to Support Services	99
15 WEL 15 Sexual Consent Awareness and Training	99
15 WE 16 Students with Learning Disabilities.....	100
15 WE 18 OPPOSITION TO THE PRIVITISATION OF BUS ROUTES.....	100
15 WE 19 Student Bereavement.....	101
15 WE 20 USI Grant Reform Policy	101
15 WE 21 Higher Education Authority Core Access Grant	101
15 WE 25 Gambling.....	102
14 WEL 1 UPDATE USI ALCOHOL POLICY.....	103
14 WEL 2 SMOKING CESSATION.....	103
14 WEL 3 CASEWORK TRAINING	104
14 WEL 4 APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST) FOR STUDENTS' UNION OFFICERS	104
14 WEL 6 AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELLORS IN THIRD LEVEL EDUCATION	105
14 WEL 7 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND	105
14 WEL 9 STUDENTS IN REMOTE AREAS	106
14 WEL 10 WATER SAFETY	107
14 WEL 11 MORNING AFTER PILL.....	107
14 WEL 14 CONTINUITY OF THE HEAR ACCESS PROGRAMME.....	107
14 WEL 16 STUDENT SUICIDE	108
13 WEL 14 SEXUAL VIOLENCE.....	109
12 WEL 3 SEXUAL HEALTH WEB SITE.....	110
12 WEL 4 ALCOHOL ABUSE.....	111
12 WEL 5 EXAM STRESS PACKS.....	111
12 WEL 6 DRINK RESPONSIBLY CAMPAIGN	112
12 WEL 7 SUICIDE PREVENTION CAMPAIGN	113
12 WEL 9 PHYSICAL HEALTH STRATEGY FOR USI.....	113
12 WEL 10 ALCOHOL POLICY FOR USI	113
12 WEL 13 SUBSTANCE ABUSE	114

12 WEL 14	EXAM STRESS CAMPAIGN.....	114
11 WEL 1	LEGAL ISSUES	115
11 WEL 2	PHYSICAL HEALTH	115
11 WEL 4	WELFARE STRATEGY DOCUMENTS.....	116
11 WEL 5	USI MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY.....	117
11 WEL 6	MORNING AFTER PILL.....	117
11 WEL 7	EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILL INFORMATION CAMPAIGN	118
11 WEL 9	MEN’S HEALTH.....	118
11 WEL 10	DON’T WALK HOME ALONE CAMPAIGN	119
11 WEL 12	MONEY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS	119
11 WEL 13	STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND	119
10 WEL 2	STUDENT PREGNANCY.....	121
10 WEL 7	SEXUAL HEALTH	121
10 WEL 11	NON- ACADEMIC SERVICES	122
09 WEL 1	EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION.....	123
09 WEL 2	ABORTION RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.....	123
EQUALITY	125
17 EQ EM 2	Motion of Solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa (Needs 2/3).....	125
17 EQ1	Access to Orkambi, the Cystic Fibrosis medication	125
17 EQ2	Equality Grounds	126
17EQ3	Integration of displaced persons into education.....	126
17 EQ4	Expansion of ‘2in2u’ Campaign	127
16 EQ 1	Decriminalisation of Sex Work.....	128
	Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship	128
16 EQ 2	Decriminalisation of Drugs	128
	Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship	128
16 EQ 3	Equality Strategy	129
	Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee	129
16 EQ 4	“Repeal the 8 th ” Strategy	130

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee	130
16 EQ 5 Traveller Support	130
Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee	130
15 EQ 1 Women in Leadership.....	130
15 EQ2 Dignity and Respect	131
15 EQ3 MSM Blood Ban in Northern Ireland	131
15 EQ4 Reproductive rights and gender identity.....	132
15 EQ6 Campaigning for an Island of equals	132
14 EQ 1 WORKING WITH MATURE STUDENTS	133
14 EQ 2 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP.....	133
14 EQ 3 MARRIAGE EQUALITY	134
14 EQ 4 LGBT* FRIENDLY CAMPUS	135
14 EQ 5 REGIONAL LGBT TRAINING EVENT	135
13 EQ 1 ADVOCATING FOR STUDENT SERVICES THAT ARE INCLUSIVE REGARDING THE REGISTRATION AND TREATMENT OF LGBT STUDENTS	136
13 EQ 3 EQUITY OF ACCESS TO USI NATIONAL COUNCIL	136
13 EQ 5 NEGOTIATION OF MATURE STUDENT/ESTRANGED STUDENT FINANCIAL ACCOUNT(S)	137
13 EQ 6 SECTION 37 EMPLOYMENT EQUALITY ACT	137
13 EQ 7 EQUALITY CAMPAIGNS FOR SINGLE FATHERS IN IRELAND	138
13 EQ 9 USI EQUALITY POLICY	139
13 EQ 10 COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEGISLATION.....	141
13 EQ 11 USI TO CAMPAIGN FOR EQUALITY BUDGETING IN IRELAND	141
13 EQ 12 USI LGBT ALLY CAMPAIGN.....	142
12 EQ 1 USI SEAT ON THE BOARD OF MATURE STUDENTS IRELAND	144
12 EQ 2 LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	144
12 EQ 3 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRAINING DVD	144
12 EQ 4 LGBT.....	145
12 EQ 5 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES	145
12 EQ 6 GENDER RECOGNITION LEGISLATION	146

12 EQ 7	LGBT MENTAL HEALTH	146
12 EQ 8	DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS ON LGBT CAMPAIGNS.....	147
12 EQ 9	GENDER NEUTRAL WELFARE CAMPAIGNS	148
11 EQ 1	LGBT AMBASSADORS.....	149
11 EQ 2	LGBT STUDENT SURVEY	149
11 EQ 3	LGBT SOCIETY MANUAL.....	149
11 EQ 4	LGBT PACKS	150
11 EQ 5	DIRECT STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.....	150
11 EQ 7	INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS.....	151
10 EQ 1	CIVIL PARTNERSHIP BILL	152
10 EQ 2	MIGRANT STUDENTS	152
10 EQ 3	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	153
10 EQ 4	Communicating with Part Time Officers	153
10 EQ 5	Negative Stereotypes in Irish Media	154
10 EQ 6	Students Attitude to Equality	154
10 EQ 7	Online Campaigning.....	155
10 EQ 8	Branding USI Equality	155
10 EQ 9	NUS-USI Collaboration.....	156
09 EQ 2 AHEAD	157
09 EQ 4	USI RAINBOW WEEK	157
Gender Equality		159
10 GE 1	Reclaim the Night	159
10 GE 3	Childcare Facilities	159
10 GE 6	Campaigning for Women.....	160
International Students		161
10 IS 4	Finance for International Students.....	161
LGBT		162
10 LGBT 2	Homophobic Bullying.....	162
10 LGBT 4	Anti-homophobia Campaign.....	162

Mature Students	163
10 MS 2 Mature Students Officer	163
10 MS 3 Peer Support for Mature Students	163
National Affairs.....	163
17 NA 1 Amendment to Article 40.3.2 of Bunreacht na hEireann	164
17 NA 2 The Impact of Brexit both North and South	164
17 NA4 Car Insurance Campaign	165
17 NA 6 Sugar Tax.....	166
16 NA 1 Electoral Commission	166
Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region.....	166
16 NA 3 Non-EEA Student Visas	167
Proposed by DITSU	167
16 NA 4 Technological Universities Bill Legislation.....	167
Proposed by DITSU	167
15 NA 2 Review of Best Practice with Regard to MSM Blood Donation.....	168
15 NA 3 Relationships with Trades Unions	168
15 NA 4 Student Supports for Prisoners	169
15 NA 5 Traveller ethnicity.....	169
15 NA 6 Debt write-down for Ireland	170
15 NA 7 Alcohol Advertising in Sport	170
14 NA 1 LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN.....	171
14 NA 2 ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS	172
14 NA 3 CORPORATION TAX IN IRELAND	173
14 NA 4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT	173
14 NA 5 OPT-OUT ORGAN DONATION	174
13 NA 1 VOTES AT 16	174
13 NA 5 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT	175
13 NA 6 RESEARCH INTO THE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS.....	175
13 NA 7 WASTE IN PUBLIC SPENDING.....	176

12 NA 1	CHILDRENS' RIGHTS.....	176
12 NA 2	CROKE PARK AGREEMENT	177
12 NA 3	PRIVATE SCHOOLS	177
12 NA 5	REFORM OF THE IRISH CONSTITUTION	178
12 NA 7	ANTI-COUNTERFEIT TRADE AGREEMENT (ACTA).....	178
12 NA 8	PUBLIC & CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT EMBARGO	179
12 / NA 9	GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT & EMIGRATION	179
12 NA 10	NATIONAL PROPERTY SERVICES REGULATORY AUTHORITY.....	180
12 NA 10	MORTGAGE REPAYMENTS.....	181
12 NA 12	EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS CAMPAIGN	182
11 NA 1	ABORTION LEGISLATION.....	182
11 NA 2	VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN	182
11 NA 3	An Ghaeilge don Ardteistiméireacht	183
	Irish Language for the Leaving Certificate	183
11 NA 4	GAELSCOILEANNA.....	184
11 NA 5	ROLLING REGISTER	185
11NA 6	MINIMUM WAGE	186
11 NA 7	JOBSEEKERS' ALLOWANCE & WORK PLACEMENT PROGRAMMES	186
09 NA 4	Elections Campaign.....	188
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS		189
17 IA1	Protection of J1 Visa Program	189
15 IA1	Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership	190
14 IA 1	SUPPORTING LGBT RUSSIA	190
UNION ORGANISATION		192
17 NC/UO 01	Strategic Review of USI.....	192
17 NC/UO 07	Gender Balancing in Delegations to ESU Events:	192
17 UO1	Independent Students' Unions.....	193
17 UO3	USI on campus	193
17 UO5	Employability & Personal Skills Development.....	194

17 UO6	USI Policy book transparency	194
17 UO7	Utilising National Council	194
17 UO8	Student Engagement with TDs	195
17 UO9	Marketing Skills Training	195
17 UO10	USI and Member Organisations Entertainments Collaboration.....	195
17 UO11	Ents Committee Reform	196
17 UO12	Regional Training Events	196
17 UO14	USI Calendar	197
17 UO15	Comparative Research Manual	198
17 UO17	Comms specific training.....	198
17 UO18	Secretary for standing committees and action points	198
17 UO19	Election Training	198
17 UO21	Regional planning days	199
17 UO22	Trans* Training for Officers	199
17 UO23	The Governance Code	200
17 UO25	Policies and Submissions Made Widely Available	200
17 UO26	Entertainment Committees at National Council	201
17 UO27	Presidents' Training Day	201
17 UO28	TU Bill Merging of Student Unions	202
16 UO 1	Seanad Cultural and Educational Panel	202
	Proposed by BMW Committee.....	202
16 UO 2	Further Education Officer.....	203
	Proposed by BMW Committee.....	203
16 UO 4	Motion to review Dublin Region representation	203
	Proposed by the Dublin Regional Committee	203
16 UO 5	USI Training Strategy	204
	Proposed by VP AAQA	204
16 UO 6	FE College SU participation	204
	Proposed by VP AAQA	204

16 UO 7 Completion of Mandates	204
Proposed by VP Equality and Citizenship	204
16 UO 8 USI Branding Guidelines	205
Submitted by: Entertainment Committee	205
16 UO 9 Student Summit 3 Year Strategy	205
Submitted by: Entertainment Committee	205
16 UO 10 Student Nurses and Midwives Campaign	206
Submitted by: Campaigns Committee	206
16 UO 11 Campaigns Feedback and Reports	207
Submitted by: Campaigns Committee	207
16 UO 12 Worker's Rights Awareness Campaign	208
Submitted by: Campaigns Committee	208
16 UO 13 USI Membership and Partnerships	208
Proposed by: USI Vice President for Campaigns	208
16 UO 14 USI Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy	209
Proposed by USI Vice President for Campaigns	209
16 UO 15 Student Sport and SSI	210
Proposed by Athlone ITSU	210
UO 16 Casework Training at SUT ~ Referred back to the next meeting of National Council .	211
Proposed by the Southern Regional Committee	211
16 UO 17 Democratic Review	211
Proposed by the Presidents' Committee	211
16 UO 18 Promoting Candidates for USI	211
Proposed by the Presidents' Committee	211
16 UO 19 FE Representation	212
Proposed by : CDCFESU	212
16 UO 20 Campaign Roadshows	212
Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU	212
16 UO 21 Evaluation of USI events	213

Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU.....	213
16 UO 22 Development of resources for class reps of part-time courses	213
Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU.....	213
16 UO 23 Crossover Training.....	213
Proposed by IT Blanchardstown SU.....	213
16 UO 24 Postgraduate student engagement	214
Proposed by National Council ad-hoc Postgraduate Committee.....	214
16 UO 25 Budgeting Training	214
Proposed by the President, USI	214
16 UO 26 Notice of requirements before campaigns	215
Proposed by IT Carlow SU	215
16 UO 28 Students' Union Mergers	215
Proposed by Cork IT SU	215
15 UO1 Comparative Research	215
15 UO2 Part time officer training.....	216
15 UO3 Students' union staff training	216
15 UO6 Regional Events to National Campaigns	217
Amendment submitted by the VP BMW:	217
15 UO7 USI Election Process	217
15 UO8 Supporting Student Media.....	218
15 UO9 Promotional Packs.....	218
15 UO10 DUBLIN STUDENT BALL	219
15 UO11 Legislation working group.....	219
15 UO13 Mature student supports.....	220
15 UO13 International Students participation:.....	220
15 UO18 Student manifesto ahead of the next general election	221
15 UO19 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy	221
15 UO21 National Council Decentralisation	222
15 UO23 Regional Issues	223

15 UO28 3 rd Party Providers.....	223
15 UO29 Campaign to encourage participation in full time Students' Union elections.....	224
15 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:	224
15 UO 31 Utilising Student Expertise within the Union	224
15 UO 32 National Charity	225
15 UO 33 1916 Commemoration	225
14 UO 8 SIPTU-USI AGREEMENT	226
13 UO 4 MOTION ON DATA PROTECTION POLICY FOR USI OFFICEBOARD AND ALL MEMBER ORGANISATIONS.....	227
12 UO 1 CODES OF CONDUCT	228
12 UO 2 PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL SENT OUT TO MO'S.....	228
12 UO 5 SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME.....	229
12 UO 7 FURTHER EDUCATION STUDENT REPRESENTATION	229
12 UO 10 PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE USI	230
12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY	231
12 UO 12 MATURE STUDENTS CONFERENCE	231
12 UO 13 VIDEO DEBATES	231
12 UO 15 ESTABLISHMENT OF A USI WORKING GROUP FOR MEMBER ORGANISATION ADMINISTRATORS	232
12 UO 19 LGBT SOCIETIES.....	232
12 UO 20 EQUALITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCH & HANDBOOK	233
12 UO 22 ÓGRA CONFERENCE.....	233
11 UO 1 MONEY MANAGEMENT TRAINING.....	234
11 UO 2 CONSTITUENT ORGANISATION CONSULTATION.....	234
11 UO 3 LOBBY OF THE OIREACHTAS/PRE BUDGET SUBMISSION	235
11 UO 5 MEMBERSHIP WORKING GROUP	235
11 UO 6 TRAINING FOR PROTEST STEWARDS.....	235
11 UO 7 STEERING MEMBERS	236
11 UO 8 FRESHERS' PACKS.....	236
11 UO 9 PAYMENT OF AFFILIATION FEES	237

10 UO 10	AREA OFFICER ROLE.....	238
10 UO 19	MANIFESTO UPDATES.....	239
10 UO 21	CAMPAIGN HISTORY	239
10 UO 26	UNION ORGANISATION	239
ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE		242
17 NC/AF	Financial Statements at Every National Council.....	242
17 AF1	USI Financial Transparency.....	242
16 AF 1	Solidarity Fund	243
	Proposed by the President, USI	243
16 AF 2	Living Wage	243
	Proposed by the President, USI	243
14 AF 1	FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR LARGE-SCALE EVENTS	244
14 AF 2	USI FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN	245
14 AF 3	USI INCOME DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY.....	245
14 AF 5	COMPENSATION OF IRISH OFFICER.....	246
13 AF 1	MOTION TO INTRODUCE INCREASED USI FINANCE COMMITTEE TRANSPARENCY	247
13 AF 2	MOTION ON COST OF USI AFFILIATION FEES	247
13 AF 3	MOTION TO ESTABLISH WORKING GROUP TO INVESTIGATE COST OF CONGRESS	248
EMERGENCY MOTIONS		249
14 EM 1	DEMONSTRATION AGAINST FORCED LABOUR SCHEMES	249
14 EM 2	THE CENTRE	249
14 EM 3	WELFARE CAMPAIGN ON SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-CONFIDENCE & BODY IMAGE	250
14 EM 4	THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN- EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD	251
14 EM 5	EQUAL MARRIAGE	251
14 EM 6	HUMAN RIGHTS.....	252
14 EM 8	POSTGRADUATE LOANS	252
14 EM 9	UKRAINIAN CRISIS.....	253
14 EM 10	IRISH JUSTICE SYSTEM	254

14 EM 11	SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE PLACEMENT SCHEME.....	254
14 EM 12	INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEF	255
14 EM 13	Board Meeting Mandate in advance of BM66	256
13 EM 1	PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION	257
13 EM 2	SHOULD WOMEN BE OUTSIDE THE HOME	257
13 EM3	GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH PROJECT.....	259
13 EM 4	SPUNOUT.....	259
12 EM 1	VOTING DAYS.....	261
12 EM 3	POLLING DATES.....	261
12 EM 4	CAPITAL ASSET TEST	261
12 EM 5	CAP ON NUMBERS OF STUDENTS.....	262
12 EM 6	MINISTERIAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS	262
11 EM 1	JAPANESE DISASTER	264
11 EM 2	TRAGEDY IN JAPAN.....	264
11 EM 3	NORTHERN IRELAND FEES CAMPAIGN.....	264
10 EM 1	THE NATIONAL MATHEMATICS SYMPOSIUM.....	265
10 EM 2	DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS	265
10 EM 3	NEW FUNDING MODEL.....	265
10 EM 4	STUDENT HOUSING	266
10 EM 5	DOMESTIC & SEXUAL ABUSE	267
IRISH LANGUAGE		268
17 IL2	Irish Language Act.....	268
16 IL 1	Flouting of the Official Languages Act 2003	268
	Proposed by DCUSU	268
16 IL 2	Múineadh na Gaeilge.....	269
16 IL 2	Teaching of the Irish Language	269
	Molta ag an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge.....	269
16 IL 3	Measúnú na Gaeilge	270
16 IL 3	Assessment of Irish Language.....	270

Molta ag an Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge.....	270
16 IL 4 Extension of the Official Languages Act to the private sector.....	270
Proposed by NUI Galway Students' Union	270
15 GA 1 Seimineár Gaeilge/ Irish Language Seminar	271
15 GA 2 Comhdháil na Mic Léinn Ceilteach/ Celtic Students Conference	271
15 GA 3 Gaeltacht Fees	272
15 GA 4 Seachtain na Gaeilge	272
14 G 1 JUNIOR CERTIFICATE REVIEW	273
14 G 2 IRISH LANGUAGE CAMPAIGNS	273
14 G 3 NEW IRISH LANGUAGE POLICY	273
14 G 4 MANDATE LU GAEILGE TO CONTACT NUS & NUS/USI TO BUILD A LONG TERM RELATIONSHIP	274
13 G 6 OIFIGEACH NA GAEILGE AG GACH AONTAS/ IRISH LANGUAGE OFFICER IN EVERY UNION	274
13 G 7 GAELSCOLAÍOCHT IN ÉIRINN	274
12 IL 1 SUPPORT OF TEACHING THROUGH IRISH.....	275
CITIZENSHIP	276
17 CZN 1 Environmental Sustainability.....	276
16 CZN 2 Students' Unions Multicultural Festival.....	277
Proposed by DITSU	277
16 CZN 3 Climate Change.....	277
Proposed by the Presidents' Committee.....	277
15 CZN 1 Lobby for 3rd Level Education Centre Polling Stations - Carried.....	278
15 CZN 3 General election hustings	278
15 CZN 4 Automatic voter registration	278
15 CZN 6 Election Information	279
15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign.....	279
15 CZN 8 VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM REFORM.....	280
14 CZN 2 SERD.....	281
14 CZN 3 POLITICAL REFORM.....	281

13 CS 1	WORKING WITH VOLUNTEER IRELAND	281
13 CS 2	YOUNG PEOPLE, CITIZENSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT	282
13 CS 3	TASKFORCE VOLUNTEERING AND CITIZENSHIP.....	282
12 CZN 1	NATIONAL CHARITY FUNDRAISING DAY	283
12 CZN 2	STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE	284
12 CZN 3	USI STUDENT PARTICIPATION AWARDS	284
12CZN 4	VOTING RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD.....	285

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

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 AA1 Refugee Access to Education

CONGRESS NOTES:

That there is a refugee crisis occurring globally, with refugees seeking residency particularly in countries within the European Union

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That many of these refugees are seeking Third Level Education in Ireland.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

That to seek financial support through SUSI to attend College one must be a resident in Ireland for 3 out of 5 years.

CONGRESS BELIEVES

That Education is crucial in integration to the communities and the development of the individual.

CONGRESS FURTHER BELIEVES

That it is unjust that refugees have this barrier put before them, in preventing them from accessing financial support from The Irish Government.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and VP AA to campaign and lobby the department of Education and Skills and the Minister for Education to change legislation for grant access to apply to cases of refugees.

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 AA5

National Student Charter

CONGRESS NOTES

That there is currently no national Student Charter.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That in institutions that have a Student Charter, it forms the backbone of the relationship the students' union has with their institution and management.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS

The work USI did in relation to students engagement and students as partners in higher education institutions, and believes that a National Student Charter is the next logical step for the work on student engagement to take.

CONGRESS MANDATES

The USI President to lobby the Minister for Education and the HEA to form a Committee with the aim of developing a National Student Charter.

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-campus. Multiple campuses are important in delivering education to regional communities.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES

That in setting up multi-campus there was additional funding provided. That funding has since stopped, giving no help to colleges to support the running of the many satellite 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 qualify 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 were 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.

2015 Emergency Motions

15 EM AAQA 1 NCAD

Congress extends:

Profound feelings of solidarity to the students currently engaged in protest in NCAD.

Congress welcomes:

The activism of NCAD students to fight against the financialisation of their education.

Congress reiterates:

Its belief in an education system that is meaningful, accessible and publicly funded.

Congress mandates the USI President and the USI VP Campaigns officer:

To give support to these NCAD students in their campaign.

15 EM AAQA 2 ST. ANGELA'S DEVELOPMENT

Congress notes with grave concern:

The recent developments in relation to the proposed incorporation of St. Angela's into NUI Galway.

Congress further notes:

The action taken by staff unions and the concerns they have raised against the management of both institutions.

Congress acknowledges:

That students have not been sufficiently engaged with in relation to the proposed incorporation and there is a need for absolute clarity of the implications of the incorporation for students.

Congress therefore mandates:

The USI President to engage with the HEA and the Minister of Education and Skills to voice concerns regarding the incorporation from the perspective of students and to report back to the next National Council.

15 AAQA 1 Academic Teaching Staff Annual Leave and the Examination and Examination Appeals Process.

Congress recognises

That the current academic teaching staff annual leave agreement has significant repercussions for the examination and examination appeals process and that furthermore that the current situation in some institutions where students who appeal their summer examination results

will not receive the outcome of this appeal until after the Autumn examinations take place is grossly unfair to students and almost defeats the purpose of appealing an examination result.

Congress further recognises

That this agreement has led, in several institutions, to Christmas examinations being scheduled before as well as after the festive period in turn delaying the examination results and appeals process, as well as many academics in third level institutions being on annual leave during the summer from the 20th June to 1st September similarly delaying the examination results and appeals process.

Congress believes

That this current system in regards to academic teaching staff annual leave affects the academic quality of service delivered to students in terms of students having to wait for up to four months to receive the outcome of an examination result appeal and in many cases having no other choice than to sit Autumn exams in failed modules to secure their chances of progressing to the next year of study or in order to be conferred at the next available sitting.

Congress further believes

The adjustment of bringing forward the start of the academic calendar by one week will alleviate the pressures on the examination correction period and the processing of appeals and that the current length of lecturing staffs' summer break should be looked at and compared to other members of the public sector's holiday entitlements.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance and the President to negotiate with the relevant bodies to adjust the academic teaching staffs working calendar.

15 AAQA 2 Investment in Education

Congress notes

The Brazilian method for corporate investment in education, i.e. 1.5% of corporate profits are re-invested into research and development.

Congress further notes

That this decision was reached collaboratively between Government, business and universities and has produced beneficial results.

Congress Mandates

All members of Officer Board to lobby for a similar system for investment in third level in Ireland.

15 AAQA 4 Students outside the grant threshold: Carried

Congress notes:

The valuable work undertaken by USI and MOs in relation to preserving the student grant and fighting for its retention

Congress further notes:

The importance of the student grant in allowing students from challenging socio-economic backgrounds to attend third level education in Ireland, but also must acknowledge the difficulty for students and families who are not in receipt of the grant or any other financial bursaries from the state.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP AAQA to undertake campaigns and strategies to increase awareness about the financial difficulties facing students not in receipt of the grant, and to campaign for the means testing of the grant to take place after tax has been deducted from the gross household income.

15 AAQA 5 Universal fee payment dates

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 6 Irish water & the grant

Congress notes

The introduction of a household charge for water on foot of the creation of Irish Water.

Congress further notes

The revised charging system introduced through the Water Services Act 2014. This includes a 'Water Conservation Grant' of €100 which Irish Water applicants can obtain through the Department of Social Protection, administered on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Congress is concerned that

This payment may be taken into account in Income assessments of student grants and that this could affect applicants who are on the border of eligibility.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to lobby the relevant authority to see that the 'Water Conservation Grant' is not assessed as a source of Income and that it is put on the list of Disregarded Sources of Income.

15 AAQA 7 Technological university supports

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 Vice President for the South, BMW and Dublin to engage with Students' Unions in MO's currently going through the TU process.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for the South, BMW and Dublin to work actively with Students' Unions in MO's who in the future may be involved in a TU process.

15 AAQA 8 Student Governance

Congress notes with concern:

The importance of participation in all levels of governance of higher education institutions.

Congress further notes:

Some bureaucratic management practices in higher education institutions can lead to a lack of openness and which can impede the efforts of student representatives.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President and Vice-President for Academic affairs and Quality Assurance to encourage all HEIs to examine governance structures at all levels, and to ensure students are represented.

15 AAQA 9 Lateral Violence

Congress notes

That the issue of lateral violence in Health Sciences, particularly nursing and midwifery is well recognised in many countries including the USA and Australia.

Congress further notes

That similar recognition does not exist in Ireland in spite of the detrimental effect on those training or employed in these areas.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for AAQA and Vice President for Welfare to investigate the extent of the problem in Ireland and the subsequent consequences for those effected with a view to informing Member Organisations on the issue.

15 AAQA 10 Cross-border student mobility

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 route on 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 10 THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Congress recognises:

The lack of transparency regarding the measurement of the quality of teaching by academics in third level.

Congress acknowledges:

That the proposed legal amendment which will allow The Teaching Council to sanction underperforming teachers at second level, thus creating an environment of quality learning.

Congress believes:

That the third level sector needs to adopt a similar approach to ensure that students receive the best quality of education.

Congress therefore mandates:

That the VP for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance and The President work alongside the HEA, QQI and/or all other relevant stakeholders to establish and utilise a watchdog which will monitor the quality of teaching in higher education.

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.

14 AAQA 14 SUSI SUPPORT FOR YOUNGER INDEPENDENT STUDENTS

Congress applauds:

USI's work in dealing with the SUSI system, and particularly the vast improvement on grant payments to students this year.

Congress notes:

The large category of students who are neglected by the current SUSI application process who are not dependent on their parents between the ages of 18-23.

Congress acknowledges:

Students who are legal adults (18 + years) and support themselves through college, cannot be assessed as independent adults, unless they are mature students or have proof of estrangement.

The great difficulty many students face in claiming estrangement through the current system.

Congress notes with concern:

Students are required to inform SUSI of change in circumstances, this does not allow for a transition to financially independent living.

Students that partake in work throughout college most often do so because they would otherwise be unable to remain in college, through current systems the sum of the students earnings is added to the cumulative family income and thus further hinders the students

potential to receive financial aid via the SUSI grant system regardless of whether or not they are actually receiving financial assistance from their parents.

Congress Mandates:

The VP AAQA and Officer Board to lobby and campaign for the restructuring of the SUSI grant application process to include a category for students who support themselves financially.

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 legalisation.

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 Job Bridge 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 practise 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/unfocussed 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

12 AA 1 TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY STATUS

Congress notes:

Section 8.7 of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (The Hunt Report), which relates to the evolution of the Institutes of Technology in Ireland. The strategy makes the case for a new type of University, known as a Technological University, which would have a different focus to those Universities established under the Universities Act 1997.

Congress further notes:

That this development would help to bring about a parity of esteem between both the sectors, whilst recognising that they are different in nature.

Congress notes with concern:

The risk of the Higher Education Sector becoming divided over this proposal.

Congress further notes with concern:

The impact of this potential for division on the education sector, and the reputation of the education of our members.

Congress acknowledges:

A move by a number of Institutes of Technology to work together to establish Technological Universities on a regional basis.

Congress welcomes:

Efforts by the Department of Education and Skills to plan for Higher Education provision in Ireland over the next two decades.

Congress stresses:

The importance of engagement with appropriate student representative organizations throughout the implementation process.

Congress mandates:

All appropriate members of Officer Board to meet and discuss the impact of Technological University status with the Member Organisations involved in each potential Technological University on a case by case basis and to make representations on their behalf, at a national level. This mandate shall be fulfilled as required, and shall be presented for review on its expiration.

12 AA 2 ESTABLISHMENT OF AGENCY FOR STUDENT TRAINING IN QA

Congress notes:

That SPARQS was created in 2003 to support the greater engagement of students in the management of quality assurance and enhancement in Scotland's Colleges and Higher Education Institutions. SPARQS is hosted by NUS Scotland and is funded by the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education.

Congress further notes:

The advancement of student participation in the QA process in Scotland since the establishment of SPARQS.

Congress notes with regret:

That little training is provided to students who are involved in the QA process in Ireland.

Congress welcomes:

The amalgamation of HETAC, FETAC, NQAI and IUQB into QQAI.

Congress mandates:

The President and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs and QA to attempt to secure funding and lobby for the establishment of an agency similar to SPARQS to be managed by USI.

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

12 AA 3 GRANT CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

That for the past several years USI's officers have carried out a campaign of information evenings across the country in the months of late summer for those applying for the student grant.

Congress also notes:

That this has been a valuable service to society generally and to our members.

Congress also notes:

That a single governmental agency would be able to commit significantly more human and financial resources to such a campaign than this Union, and that with the creation of the single national grants awarding agency that such an agency now exists.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance, Vice President for the Southern Region and the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region to work with the above named agency toward jointly provisioning the grant awareness and information campaign in the future. The first of these recurring campaigns shall be completed by October 2012.

12 AA 4 TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITIES

Congress recognises:

That many Institutes of Technology are aiming to become Technological Universities (TU) in coming years.

Congress further recognises:

That should the number of Institutes of Technology which have currently declared their intention to seek TU status actually achieve that status, this would create a situation where almost every major provider of third-level education in Ireland would be some form of university.

Congress notes:

That the international recognition of all of our qualifications is vital in ensuring our graduates have a decent chance of employment, regardless of whether those qualifications are from a University, an Institute of Technology, or any other provider of third-level education.

Congress mandates the USI Officerboard:

To ensure that the National Council and the Member Organisations in general are kept fully informed of developments regarding the possible re-designation of Institutes of Technology as Technological Universities over the next three years

To lobby the Government over the next three years to maintain the current criteria for the re-designation of an Institute of Technology as a Technological University, and to include this issue in future Lobby of the Oireachtas documents.

12 AA 5 CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LECTURING STANDARDS IN HEI'S

Congress notes:

The importance of continued monitoring of the teaching standards of 3rd level courses, which contribute to the degree awarding abilities of all HEIs.

Congress further notes:

The importance of lectures and tutors/mentors in students' time in 3rd and 4th level education.

Congress notes with concern:

That any short comings in lecturers' attempts to continually develop their teaching methodology and knowledge in their chosen area will have seriously detrimental effects on their ability to assist their students' learning.

Congress further notes with concern:

That, currently, no legislation exists which governs the need for lecturers to develop their teaching methodology and knowledge in their chosen area.

Congress mandates:

The USI President, following consultation with any representative union with 3rd level lecturing staff among their membership, to lobby the HEA to introduce and implement criteria based, Peer led Performance Review scheme to monitor the performances of lectures on an annual or biennial basis. Independent student feedback is to be an integral element of these criteria. This mandate should be fulfilled by June 2013.

Congress further mandates:

That the President lobby the HEA to establish a working group to form the framework and criteria for this performance review scheme, which includes, but is not limited to, representatives for students, lecturing staff and a national 3rd level Quality Assurance organisation. This mandate should be fulfilled by June 2013.

12 AA 6 RE-INSTITUTION OF GAELTACHT GRANT FOR TEACHERS

Congress notes:

The benefit that time in the Gaeltacht affords trainee teachers

Congress notes with concern:

Steps taken by government to remove the grant for teaching students to go to the Gaeltacht as part of their course.

Congress mandates:

The Vice-President for Academic affairs and Quality Assurance and the Vice-President for the Irish Language to lobby the department, and minister for education to reverse the decision to remove the grant, in order to ensure that trainee teachers may continue to attend the Gaeltacht during their course.

12 AA 7 GRANT REFORM (ESTRANGED PARENTS)

Congress applauds:

That the Student Support Act 2011 has come in to effect and that from summer 2012 the administration of the student grant scheme will be significantly more streamlined, and the application process more clear and user friendly for those applying.

Congress notes:

That for those whose parents are informally separated, or who have no tangible connection to one or both parents for whatever reason, and who are under the age of 23 applying for a grant remains impossibly burdensome due to the onerous documentary evidence obligation on the applicant.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance to propose an alternative method of proving independence for adoption by National Council before the end of December 2012.

And

That a detailed submission be made by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance and the President to government on this subject before April 2013.

12 AA 8 MERGING OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Congress notes:

That discussions for regional clustering and merging of Higher Education institutions are currently on going.

Congress recognises:

The positive developments these institutions will bring to research, teaching & learning and provision of facilities and services.

Congress notes with concern:

That the individual nature of an institution's ethos, identity and traditions may be lost in the creation of mergers and amalgamation of institutions.

Congress mandates:

Officer Board to keep an institution's ethos in mind when in discussion with the HEA and all relevant stakeholders to ensure that they are protected and to report back to National Council and the MOs who will be affected. The mandate shall lapse after three years from being passed at congress as discussions will be on going with regard to the future of Higher Education in Ireland.

12 AA 9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEA REPORT FROM THE WORKING GROUP ON STUDENT CONTRIBUTION

Congress commends:

The work done by the group and the report it has compiled.

Congress notes:

The financial strain that student services are facing across the country, even with the increased contribution charge by students.

Congress notes with concern:

Varying practices between HEIs, which directly contradict the General Principles outlined in the report, much to the detriment of student services and students' unions alike.

Congress mandates:

That all USI Vice Presidents and President, where relevant, lobby the HEA to ensure that all HEIs adopt the general principles and recommendations of the report. By arranging meetings with the relevant senior HEA officials before the end of December 2012.

11 ED 2 THE HUNT REPORT REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The publication of the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 known as the Hunt Report.

Congress believes:

That all stakeholders, particularly students, will benefit from having clear, defined long term goals for the sector.

Congress recognises:

The impact that this Report may have on the education sector as a whole.

Congress mandates the President and the Education Officer:

To ensure that there is student representation at all levels of where authority to implement recommendations of the Hunt Report lies.

11 ED 3 STUDENT CONTRIBUTION CHARGE

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The scrapping of the Registration Fee and its replacement with the Student Contribution Charge.

Congress further notes:

That these increases will make attending Higher Education even more difficult than was previously the case.

Congress recognises:

That front loading of the Student Contribution Charge and other associated costs with attending Higher Education into the first half of the first semester further strains the budgets of students and their families.

Congress mandates the Education Officer:

To campaign to ensure that all colleges operate an instalment plan whereby students can pay the Student Contribution Charge in smaller lump sums spread throughout the Academic Year.

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 Student Assistance Fund and 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 5 ECTS HARMONISATION

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

Ireland's increasing compliance with the Bologna Process.

Congress further notes:

That the Bologna process has improved the level of transferability and comparability of awards across the European Higher Education Area.

Congress recognises:

That much work remains to be done to implement harmonisation of hours of work required to earn an ECTS credit.

Congress mandates the Education Officer:

To investigate the situation on a national and local level and ascertain trends in compliance by college and by broad subject area and then to lobby institutions to correct shortfalls and excesses that are present.

11 ED 6 EXAM REGULATIONS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the regulations concerning progression, transfer and quality of awards subsequent to students having failed an exam in an award year differ between institutions.

Congress believes:

That this situation creates inequalities given that students who get the same results in different institutions will achieve different outcomes which is contrary to national and international guidelines.

Congress mandates the Education Officer:

To investigate each institution, prepare and submit a report to National Council detailing which Colleges are deviating from national and international guidelines.

11 ED 8 PUBLIC SECTOR MORATORIUM

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress believes:

That the Public Sector Moratorium was a blunt tool used to reduce public sector staffing numbers that has ended up impacting frontline education and health services unnecessarily.

Congress also believes:

That the Moratorium is forcing many Irish graduates, that would normally be streamed into public service, to emigrate to countries like Australia, Canada and the UK.

Congress notes:

USI's policies on graduate unemployment, and the consistent campaign to create jobs for graduates in Ireland

Congress mandates the President and Officer board:

To call for and work towards a re-negotiation of the Public Sector Moratorium to improve prospects for employment for Irish graduates with the newly formed Government.

11 ED 9 GRADUATE UNEMPLOYMENT

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That Ireland is facing a major jobs and competitiveness crisis.

Congress further notes:

That over 150,000 people will emigrate from Ireland by 2015, a vast majority of which will be graduates. This figure is the equivalent of every graduate Ireland produces over the next five years leaving the country.

Congress believes:

That with almost 100,000 Irish people under the age of 25 on the live register it is imperative that all political parties recognise the severity of the jobs crisis among younger people and make the issue of graduate unemployment a main priority going forward.

Congress mandates the Deputy President, Education Officer and Area Officers:

To continue working on tackling graduate unemployment by lobbying for the implementation of measures recommended in USI's 'Reigniting the Smart Economy'.

Congress therefore adopts:

The measures proposed in 'Reigniting the Smart Economy' as USI policy.

Congress further mandates:

The Deputy President, Education Officer and Area Officers to put pressure on the government to produce a comprehensive long-term strategy to tackle graduate unemployment.

11 ED 10 EFFECT OF RECESSION

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

There is a large, if relatively unknown body, of economic and social research statistics on the effects of the recession on businesses, families etc.

Congress also notes:

That in talking about how students, and the families that they are increasingly reliant on, have been affected, it is difficult to show comprehensively how the recession has impacted students' finances along with their family finances.

Congress mandates Officer Board:

To commission/compile an impact assessment report on how the recession has affect student finances, and also how it has affected families supporting students.

Congress recommends:

That this report should take into consideration: public sector/private sector representation in supporting families and the recessionary impact on them, personal and national debt analysis and how over indebtedness affects people/families, geographic analysis of recessionary impact to aid regional COs, drop in student employment, and if possible the significant drop in student/family expenditure.

11 ED 12 CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRANGEGORMAN CAMPUS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the development of the Grangegorman Campus is an essential cornerstone of Higher Education Strategy in Ireland, and that it will be of immeasurable benefit to the local community, and Ireland.

Congress further notes:

That DIT caters for approximately eleven percent of all Higher Education activity nationally.

Congress applauds:

The Government's decision to approve the development, and the support that is currently present across the political parties.

Congress mandates the President, and Officer Board:

To lobby the Government and the HEA to continue to support the project, in conjunction with the DIT Students' Union.

11 ED 17 FUNDING FOR MATURE STUDENTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That in the past two years, there have been significant changes in rates and eligibility for mature students in relation to the Maintenance Grant, which have resulted in some students suffering a significant drop in funding.

Congress notes:

That the automatic entitlement of mature students to the non-adjacent rate of the Maintenance Grant had been based on higher than average living costs, and this has now been removed.

Congress mandates the Equality Officer and the Education Officer:

To compose a policy document outlining a new method of support funding for mature students and non-mature students which will be assessed on a more individual basis to account for matters such as, but not limited to, the number and age of dependents and travel costs associated with dependents in pre-school, first-level or second level education etc.

11 ED 18 MATHEMATICS BONUS POINTS

REAPPROVED 2015

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 19 MAINTENANCE GRANTS 2

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The current situation of higher education maintenance grants criteria is firstly based on what education institution they attend.

Congress believes:

That third level education should be an open playing field for students and grants should be made available to students based on each individual circumstance on meeting the required criteria rather than on what education institution they attend.

Congress further notes:

That there should be equality and accessibility to education to everyone, for further progressing the opportunities available to students and that that the current grants system is inequitable, significantly unfair and is a barrier to those trying to attend third-level education.

Congress also believes:

That USI should be in a position to fight for equitable access to education grants in every circumstance.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President, Deputy President, Education Officer and the rest of Officer Board

To take action in lobbying the Minister for Education and Skills, pursuant to Section 8 of the Student Support Act 2011, to provide that private colleges such as Griffith College are included in the Higher Education Grant Scheme.

11 ED 20 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

REAPPROVED 2015

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 5 LEGAL PROFESSION

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That to enter the legal profession in Ireland, one must overcome many financial and social obstacles.

Congress further notes:

That these obstacles mean that the majority undertaking a career in law are those who can afford it and who have pre-existing ties to the legal profession

Congress notes with concern:

That such obstacles include

Exceptionally high costs for postgraduate study in the King's Inns, with a one year degree course costing €12,000. This course is also run during the day (as opposed to the evening diploma course) so people cannot work full time simultaneously.

Barristers in their first year of practice must be able to afford to work for free during their year's apprenticeship, also known as 'devilling'. The apprenticeship must also take place in Dublin, thus increasing costs for candidates even further if forced to live away from home.

Congress believes:

That while the abolition of third level fees has delivered good progress in increasing access to education for people of all social backgrounds, more must be done to ensure that these artificial barriers to real educational equality of opportunity in certain professions are removed.

Congress affirms its belief that:

No profession should be the sole preserve of the wealthy and socially connected.

Congress mandates:

The President and the Education officer to give a presentation to the Joint Oireachtas committee on Education and Science on access to the legal system

The President and Deputy to campaign and lobby for the extension of the higher education grants scheme to those taking barrister and solicitor courses.

10 ED 7 STUDENT FUNDING

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That with the economy struggling, students need all the help they can get in securing funding in the form of grants, scholarships and other non-traditional forms of supports for college degrees.

Congress believes:

That USI needs to lobby the Department of Education to compile a list of all forms of funding for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees that is available to students in every third-level institute in the country.

Congress notes:

That the studentfinance.ie website is a great resource for students and prospective students, and that it should be utilised more to help people looking for financial information before going to college.

Congress mandates:

The Education Officer to lobby the Department of Education to publicise the aforementioned list of funding available on the studentfinance.ie website.

10 ED 8 BTEA CAMPAIGN

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That the removal of the entitlement of Back to Education students to a maintenance grant will cost unemployed mature students in the region of €7,000 a year in expected income.

Congress firmly believes:

That the decision to bring in this measure was wrong, unfair, and is not in the interests of this country, either financially or socially.

Congress notes:

That for many people trying to go back to education, the Budget cuts represent a loss of over 25% in expected income
Union of Students in Ireland Annual Congress 2010 Comhdhail
Bhlaintuill Aontas na Mac Leinn in Eirinn 2010 - 24 - - 24 -

Congress mandates:

The Education Officer to organise a sustained campaign to reverse this decision before the Department of Education & Science finalises its implementation over the summer.

10 ED 9 MEETING FEEDBACK

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That USI, as the National Union representing most students studying at third-level colleges in Ireland, holds seats on all the bodies charged with policy, funding quality assurance and regulation of the third level sector, such as the HEA and NQAI and others.

Congress notes with concern:

The lack of institutional memory in USI with regard to issues discussed at these meeting.

Congress further notes:

The importance of this high-level involvement for the constituent members of USI who pay an annual affiliation fee to USI.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President and Education Officer to create effective briefing and reporting communication channels, pre and post these meetings which USI attends (Pre meeting to consist of a notification of agenda items, and what stance USI plans to take on each, and an aide memoir post meeting of the discussion of each topic, what USI represented to the meeting and what the outcomes was.) on behalf of CO"s, and where matters relevant to the COs are decided upon.

10 ED 11 APPRENTICES

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That over the past number of years the increase within the trades industry with regards to Ireland.

Congress further notes:

That with the economic downturn many of these apprentices have been left with no job and in some cases incomplete qualifications.

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

REAPPROVED 2015

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 1 TUITION FEES

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That it has long been a core principle of the student movement that education should be accessible to all people.

Congress recognises:

That tuition fees constitute a serious barrier to entry into third level education.

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. Importantly, providing a college education to all is an important factor in creating a fair and more democratic society with equal opportunity for all.

Congress further notes:

That the OECD's "education at a glance 2008" lists Ireland at the top of selected industrialised countries for "providing the most equitable access to higher education". This shows that the abolition of fees has had a significant impact on increasing equity of access, despite successive

governments' failure to follow up the success of free fees with a corresponding commitment to educational equality across the board.

Congress further notes:

That in two decades Ireland has seen an increase in access to third level education from 20% to 55%, and that a large factor in this has been the abolition of third level fees.

Congress believes:

That the economic crisis means that now, more than ever Ireland must make education accessible to all, in order to equip our people with the skills and knowledge that will help them innovate, create new jobs and attract foreign investment. Ireland's future depends on investing in its people.

Congress hereby reaffirms:

Its commitment to an equal, fair and accessible education system, and to the complete abolition of tuition fees, including the registration fee.

Congress notes:

The huge campaigns in 2002/03 and 2008/09 run by USI to oppose tuition fees.

Congress mandates:

USI officer board to redouble its efforts to fight fees in any guise and to continue to place this issue at the centre of its lobbying and campaigning efforts.

Congress calls for:

A commitment by the government to fund third level education and all essential services through progressive taxation, where those on higher incomes pay the most.

Congress urges:

All local students' unions to recognise their central role in the national campaign against fees, and to make fees their priority as students' union representatives and as members of the national union. The USI is not officer board – it is all members. Therefore all members are responsible for engaging with the campaign.

09 ED 2 STUDENT LOANS/GRADUATE TAX
REAPPROVED 2015

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

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 fit for purpose. Learning outcomes must be used to create a student-centred learning environment and may not be used to create a box-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

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 WITH DELETIONS 2015

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.

09 ED 18 POST GRADUATE WORKING GROUP

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

That postgraduate students are often very limited in the amount of time they can dedicate towards ancillary roles in local unions and USI itself.

Congress further notes:

That the issues that postgraduates face are often hindered by a lack of continuity from officer to officer, and that issues that occur nationwide could be solved by an effective communication network between postgraduate officers.

Congress therefore mandates:

The education officer to create a database of postgraduate issues that arose, and how they were addressed at local and national levels. This database should be made available to all postgraduate and education officers nationwide.

Congress also mandates:

The education officer to ensure that contact details of all postgraduate officers are available in the database.

Congress further mandates:

The education officer to organize meetings with the postgraduate officers, if necessary, to address their issues.

09 ED 25 POSTGRADUATE WORK PLACEMENTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The cost incurred by students entering into work placement positions. Often these placements take on the form of free labour for employers.

Congress believes:

That all students entering into work placements should receive payment for the duration of the placement.

Congress mandates the officer board:

To campaign for payment for these types of placement.

09 ED 28 POSTGRADUATE CAMPAIGN

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The growing population of postgraduate students within USI

Congress regrets:

That many postgraduate students feel disconnected from USI

Congress therefore mandates:

The education officer to organise a promotion campaign within the first semester of each year, to highlight the success and the services of USI to postgraduate students specifically

WELFARE

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 6th 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-associated 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 WEL19 Combating Cyberbullying in Third Level

CONGRESS NOTES

The detrimental effect cyberbullying and online abuse can have on a person and their everyday lives.

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN

The increasing amount of time we spend living our lives online, and how easily students may be attacked online anonymously or otherwise and to have information shared about them without their permission.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES WITH CONCERN

The rising number of incidents in relation to revenge porn online and the lack of regulation around the issue.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

USI to adopt a new updated version of the USI Cyberbullying policy which reflects current social media trends.

CONGRESS THEREFORE ALSO MANDATES

The current USI Cyberbullying policy to be repealed in place of the new Cyberbullying policy.

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 2 Amend grant reform document

Congress Notes

That students who receive a grant through SUSI and progress between levels on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) are required to reapply for a grant every time they progress, even if they are progressing within the one institution. This is as a result of Department of Education & Skills policy surrounding data collection.

Congress Regrets

The needless duplication of effort involved as a result of this policy.

Congress Therefore Amends

The Grant Reform Policy to instruct Officer Board to campaign for a streamlined process whereby students progressing through NFQ levels in the same institution are not required to submit documentation for complete reassessment.

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 government 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 Accommodation 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 recommendations. 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.

3 years.

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 12 Drug and Harm Reduction Awareness Campaign

Congress Mandates:

The VP Welfare to run a drugs awareness and harm reduction national campaign by the end of the first semester.

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 14 Bereavement

Congress notes:

Each MO has different protocols in the event of a student bereavement occurring, which they believe to be best practice.

Congress also notes:

The shock and tragic nature that can surround sudden bereavements within the student body and how it can affect fellow students academic and mental wellbeing.

Congress notes with concern:

That student officers may not be trained to deal with bereaved students in tragic cases that may arise.

Congress also notes with concern:

That it may be a very stressful and difficult time for student officers also who may struggle to cope in these extreme situations.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Welfare to create a set of guidelines for officers as a support and referral guide on how best to deal with Student bereavement in supporting bereaved students and themselves.

Congress also mandates:

The VP Welfare to coordinate a training event on bereavement for all officers annually before the academic year commences.

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.

2015 EMERGENCY MOTIONS

15 EM WEL 1 Drinks Campaign

Congress notes:

The recent events surrounding the Diageo funded body 'Role Models'.

Congress declares:

That Congress has no confidence in public bodies advocating on the issue of alcohol misuse and abuse which are funded by the drinks industry.

Congress calls:

On all public health and education bodies who sit on this board to resign from this board and to no longer support this model.

Congress mandates the USI President:

To campaign against this body 'Role Models' and the continuation of such bodies based on this model.

15 WE2 Student assistance fund

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 3 Consent

Congress applauds the success of sexual health and empowerment campaigns such as SHAG week, which promotes a healthy attitude towards sex with a holistic approach.

Congress agrees that while sexual consent is included as a part of SHAG week, it is time that the USI rolled out a comprehensive national student consent campaign separately.

Congress Mandates that the Vice President for Welfare, Campaigns and Equalities and Citizenship create a national consent campaign. That is gender neutral in approach and separate to SHAG week.

Congress Further Mandates the USI President and Vice President for Welfare to actively lobby and campaign for mandatory consent classes or workshops to be delivered to every single class within the third level education system in their first semester of college.

15 WE 4 Anti-Bullying Policy

Congress Notes

The lack of policy and awareness in the area of bullying in Third Level.

Congress further Notes

That bullying can present in many different ways and in various aspects of student life including, but not limited to in class, accommodation and through social media.

Congress affirms

USI Cyberbullying Policy as passed by Congress in 2013

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Welfare develop an Anti- Bullying Policy that would take into consideration USI Cyberbullying policy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations and action points.

15 WE 9 Sexual Health Awareness and Guidance Week

Congress notes

That five percent of Irish 18-year-olds will leave secondary school without any formal sexual health education, according to the Durex Sexual Wellbeing Global Survey, 2012.

Congress further notes

The need to educate students on all aspects of sexual health when they first enter third level.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Welfare to endeavour to hold Sexual Health Awareness week in the first semester.

15 WE 10 Update USI Physical Health Strategy

Congress notes

The USI Physical Health strategy is due to expire in 2015.

Congress further notes

The importance on USI having a Physical Health Strategy and need to update strategies that are due to expire.

Congress mandates

The Vice President Welfare to work with various bodies like Student Sport Ireland to create a new Physical Health strategy.

15 WE 12 Motion to provide training and contacts to deal with issues regarding BTEA

Congress notes

The number of mature students who rely on the back to education allowance.

Congress further notes

That SU officers may be ill-equipped to deal with the problems arising in applying for and receiving BTEA.

Congress Mandates

The VP Welfare to organise training for SU Officers on dealing with casework relating to BTEA.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP Welfare to set up a contact within the Department of Social Protection that can be used by SU officers' when resolving issue with BTEA

15 WE 13 Mental Health Awareness

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 the use of medication in relation to mental health issues as part of their on-going mental health campaigns.

15 WE 14 Barrier Free Access to Support Services

Congress notes:

The importance of supports services for students of our institutions which provide support in the areas of physical and mental health.

Congress further notes:

That these support services are of vital importance to students in the context of the prevalence of mental health and emotional difficulties among our members.

Congress therefore mandates:

That the VP Welfare would lobby for the provision of, as far as is possible, barrier free access to support services (e.g. health centres, counselling, etc.) on campus and would invest appropriately therein.

15 WEL 15 Sexual Consent Awareness and Training

Congress notes

There are many incidences of sexual harassment or assault that occur on campuses right across the country. Sexual harassment is behaviour that is “unwanted, persistent and of a sexual nature”. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Unwanted sexual comments (including comments about your body or private life);
- (b) Unwelcome sexual invitations, innuendoes and offensive gestures;
- (c) Wolf whistling, catcalling or offensive sexual noises;
- (d) Groping, pinching or smacking of your body;
- (e) Having your skirt or top lifted without consent;
- (f) Someone exposing their sexual organs to you without consent.

Congress is aware

That there is no current form of consent training being provided to students in Ireland. As a consequence, there is a culture in third-level institutions where unwanted sexual contact and harassment has become normalised and is seen as an acceptable part of the college experience for many students.

Congress believes

1. That all students have the right to be, and feel, safe on campus.
2. That sexual harassment can cause serious distress and have a seriously detrimental effect on people’s well-being.

3. That Students' Unions need to educate its members about what sexual harassment is and the effects it has on people, in order to change people's attitudes so that sexual harassment is no longer seen as acceptable.

Congress notes

That a form of consent training was provided to Freshers on a trial basis in Oxford University, Cambridge University, and a number of other institutions in the UK, and that USI should learn from this.

Congress mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship, in consultation with VP Welfare, to endeavour to run consent training for SUs, so that all sabbatical officers are educated about sexual harassment and assault, and are trained to deal with reports of sexual harassment and assault more effectively and sensitively.

Congress further mandates

VP Equality and Citizenship, in consultation with VP Welfare, Cosc and any other relevant bodies, to design and implement a programme of consent training to be delivered during orientation/Freshers Week.

15 WE 16 Students with Learning Disabilities

USI Congress Notes:

The excellent work done by USI in the area of representation for students with disabilities.

USI Congress further Notes:

That, in the past, campaigns regarding students with disabilities have tended to focus primarily on students with physical disabilities.

USI Congress notes with Regret:

The lack of attention which has been paid during this campaigning to students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, autism, etc.

USI Congress further notes with Concern:

That, for students with learning disabilities, services in third level institutes can be sorely lacking in some cases, thus placing a great barrier between such students and their access to education.

USI Congress Reaffirms:

That every student has a right to access to third-level education.

USI Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and The Vice President for Welfare to run a campaign before the end of October in each academic year to inform students with any disability what support services should be available to them.

15 WE 18 OPPOSITION TO THE PRIVITISATION OF BUS ROUTES

Congress notes with concern:

Government plans to open up a number of bus routes in Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann to private providers.

Congress also notes:

That longer commutes have a seriously negative impact on one's mental health, as well as one's student experience.

Congress affirms:

That public transport is a service that students depend upon and that its' primary aim should not be 'for profit'.

Congress notes with concern:

That USI's pre-budget submission seriously highlighted that Ireland's approach to students and public transport is lacking in comparison to most of the rest of Europe.

Congress mandates:

USI to express its opposition to further privatisation of public transport roots and that rather, the VP Welfare should arrange for a policy position and campaign that seeks to increase state-run, student-oriented transport services.

An update should be provided for the August 2015 National Council.

15 WE 19 Student Bereavement

Congress Notes

Many Students who suffer from bereavement during their time in college can have effect on their mental health, finances and academic performance.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP for Welfare to co-ordinate a campaign with literature that provides support, advice and support services to students who are suffering from bereavement.

Congress also mandates

The USI VP for Welfare to provide training to Welfare Officers to support students in this position as well as providing links to organisations who work in the area of bereavement.

15 WE 20 USI Grant Reform Policy

Congress Approves:

The adoption of the USI Grant Reform Policy. (See www.usi.ie)

15 WE 21 Higher Education Authority Core Access Grant

Congress Notes

That the Access Grant, used for the Student Assistance Fund (SAF) and Student Disabilities Fund (SDF), is awarded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), and that there are no strict guidelines as to how this funding is used.

Congress Further Notes

The lack of guidelines from the HEA, has led to a lack of transparency as to how the Access Fund is divided between the SAF and SDF, and also in relation to how the funding is spent.

Congress Believes

That there should be specific guidelines set in place by the HEA, as to how Institutes allocate funding from the Access Grant to the SAF and to the services supported by the SDF.

Congress Mandates

The President through their Chair on the HEA, to seek a full review of the Access Grant.

Congress Further Mandates

The President through their chair on the HEA, to seek the implementation of stricter guidelines surrounding the spending of the Core Access Grant and report their findings to National Council.

15 WE 25 Gambling

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 1 UPDATE USI ALCOHOL POLICY

Congress notes:

The motion passed, without objection, at USI National Council in November 2013 which ceased all workings with Drinkaware.ie and MEAS.

Congress believes:

USI should only work with independent experts on alcohol awareness and should be proactive on this issue.

Congress acknowledges:

USI Alcohol Policy 2012-2015

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to work with various bodies including Alcohol Action Ireland and Alcohol Forum to update the USI Alcohol Policy.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to include proposed actions on pricing, availability and marketing, training and support for local Students' Unions and proposed actions on a national alcohol awareness campaign. This must be completed before November 2014.

14 WEL 2 SMOKING CESSATION

Congress notes:

That smoking levels in Ireland, although decreasing, remain at around 23% for young adults and 7,000 people die from smoking related disease every year.

Congress further notes:

The current trend in some public institutes to ban smoking on their premise. Whilst this may help deter some smokers, current research shows that many smokers report they would rather quit smoking completely.

Congress affirms:

That it is best practice to provide evidence-based and approved methods of smoking cessation.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to work with all relevant bodies in the promotion of smoking cessation to students across both Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Vice President should present plans of this campaign by November 2014.

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 WEB SITE

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.

Motion shall apply for 3 years.

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 tackling 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 1 LEGAL ISSUES

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The regularity with which local welfare officers encounter situations with legal ambiguity e.g. cases involving sexual, physical abuse, accommodation issues etc

Congress further notes:

Often welfare officers feel underequipped to deal with or are unaware of their legal responsibilities in these situations.

Congress therefore mandates the Welfare Officer:

To liaise with relevant organisations to produce a legal factsheet on the situations that frequently arise throughout a typical Academic year. The Welfare Officer should also provide training if necessary on certain legal aspects as requested by welfare working group.

Congress notes:

It is not possible for this factsheet to be exhaustive or to be equivalent to legal advice, but all efforts should be made to be as comprehensive as possible.

11 WEL 2 PHYSICAL HEALTH

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The lack of mandates and policy on the issue of students and physical health.

Congress notes with concern:

The tendency of young people to sacrifice physical health for academic achievement through lack of sleep, lack of exercise and poor diet.

Congress further notes:

The diet, exercise and lifestyle play a vital role in a students' ability to engage productively with their education.

Congress therefore mandates the welfare officer:

To design a strategy document on physical health, making reference to the following:-

- Stress Management
- Access to healthcare
- Awareness of prevalent illnesses
- Cost and value for money of student gyms
- Availability of non-competitive sport
- Diet and nutrition
- Sports Clubs
- Training at UOS for welfare officers
- Relevance of physical health to mental health.
- Body image and eating disorders

This document should incorporate relevant mandates from the USI Policy Manual.

11 WEL 4 WELFARE STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

The usefulness of a coherent, streamlined strategy in areas such as mental health, sexual health, finance etc

Congress further notes:

The lack of coherent, streamlined USI policy in these areas bar mental health.

Congress therefore mandates the Welfare officer:

To create 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. This work should be done in conjunction with welfare working group and any other appropriate outside organisations.

These strategies should incorporate relevant mandates from the USI Policy Manual. These documents should be brought for preliminary approval to National Council.

Congress further mandates the Welfare Officer:

To bring these documents forward to the nearest Congress for ratification.

11 WEL 5 USI MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

08/WEL 5 mandating the creation of a USI Mental Health Strategy.

Congress applauds:

The creation of Student Lives, Minds and Wellbeing – The USI Mental Health Strategy 2010-2013.

Congress therefore deletes:

09-WEL 10 – Free Pack

09/ WEL 7 – Headsup

09/WEL 6- Mental Health Campaign

09/WEL 5 – Counselling Services

09/WEL 4 – Mental Health Information

Congress Mandates the Welfare Officer:

To both follow the USI Mental 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.

11 WEL 6 MORNING AFTER PILL

REAPPROVED 2015

Congress notes:

09/ WEL 1 Congress mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to co-ordinate with relevant groups to provide more comprehensive information on the different forms of EC. USI Officer Board to campaign for the introduction of 'over-the-counter' emergency contraception for people over the age of 17, as this is the age of consent.

Congress emphasises:

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 therefore welcomes:

The recent decision by a leading pharmacy chain to sell the morning after pill over the counter.

Congress also welcomes:

Moves by the Irish Pharmacy Union to emulate this initiative in 1800 of their member pharmacies.

Congress therefore mandates the USI Welfare Officer:

To continue to work with relevant organisations to ensure that the mandate from 09/WEL 1 is fulfilled.

The USI Welfare Officer to work to make EC affordable and accessible to all who need it.

11 WEL 7 EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILL INFORMATION CAMPAIGN REAPPROVED 2015

Congress welcomes:

The introduction of the Morning After Pill (MAP) over the counter by Boots Pharmacies in the Republic of Ireland from January 12th 2011.

Congress notes:

That the Morning After Pill does play a role in the decrease of the amount of pregnancies among female students.

Congress further notes:

That many students are unaware of how the MAP works, when the best time is to take it and the issues involved in taking it.

Congress therefore mandates the Welfare Officer:

To run an information campaign about the Morning After Pill and to make it an integral part in future S.H.A.G campaigns.

11 WEL 9 MEN'S HEALTH

Congress notes:

The good work that the USI Welfare Officer and local Welfare Officers do in promoting positive mental, physical and sexual health amongst all students.

Congress mandates the USI Welfare Officer:

To form a link with MHFI (Men's Health Forum Ireland) and other groups associated with promoting better awareness of men's health issues.

Congress further mandates the USI Welfare Officer:

To then use these links to provide campaign material, training and advice to welfare officers on how best to improve awareness of these issues to male students.

11 WEL 10 DON'T WALK HOME ALONE CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The success of the "Don't walk home alone" campaign that has been run on a number of colleges throughout the county but most notably GMIT.

Congress acknowledges:

The importance in educating our student to be safe when on nights out and they should take precautions to protect themselves

Congress therefore mandates the Welfare Officer and the Area Officers:

To bring this campaign to a national level and to investigate if the "cab now, pay later" initiative can be implemented across all local CO's.

11 WEL 12 MONEY MANAGEMENT AWARENESS

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 Welfare Officer:

To run a Money management awareness week and to also publish a financial guide to aid students with their budgeting problems.

11 WEL 13 STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND

Congress notes:

The importance of the Student Assistance Fund and the role it plays to support students across the Country.

Congress acknowledges:

That the Student Assistance Fund may be targeted in Government cutbacks.

Congress therefore mandates the President and Deputy President:

To lobby against any cuts to the Student Assistance Fund and to campaign for increased funding

for the fund.

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 Bhliaintuail 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

17 EQ EM 2 Motion of Solidarity with Ibrahim Halawa (Needs 2/3)

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 & 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 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:

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 is 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.

15 EQ2 Dignity and Respect

That Sabbatical teams can be diverse in their constitution.

Congress Further Notes

That Sabbatical Officers may not be immediately cognisant of potential issues that might affect their colleagues in the workplace, e.g. sexism and homophobia.

Congress believes

That all Sabbatical Officers should feel safe and respected in their working environments.

Congress therefore

mandates

The VP Equality & Citizenship to provide Dignity and Respect Training for all Sabbatical Officers during SUT /SUT+

15 EQ3 MSM Blood Ban in Northern Ireland

Congress notes:

In September 2011 the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales announced that regulations banning the donation of blood by Gay and Bisexual men would be lifted, and allow for implementing a one-year deferral period instead. This decision comes after the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs (SABTO) carried out a review and found it could no longer support the permanent exclusion of men who have had sex with men from blood donation.

Congress further notes:

That this change in regulation did not extend to Northern Ireland, despite it being part of the UK, and that despite multiple court cases where it was ruled that the Northern Ireland Minister for Health was unjustified in their refusal to alter the MSM Blood Ban and was

"infected by apparent bias" the lifetime blood ban still remains for MSM, while a 12 month blood ban is in place for WSMSM

Congress believes that:

The Northern Irish MSM Blood Ban is discriminatory against members of the LGBT+ Community and is founded on nothing more than inherent bias and bigotry.

Congress mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to actively campaign to call for an end to this discriminatory ban in Northern Ireland.

Congress also mandates:

The VP Equality & Citizenship to offer their unconditional support and resource to collaborate with the NUS-USI LGBT Officer regarding the ongoing campaign to remove the ban on MSM Blood Donation in the North.

15 EQ4 Reproductive rights and gender identity

Congress notes

It is not only those who identify as women who require full reproductive autonomy. Members of the trans* community and those who do not identify with binary genders also require access to reproductive healthcare.

Congress mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to ensure this is acknowledged in campaigning for abortion rights.

15 EQ6 Campaigning for an Island of equals

Congress believes:

- **That across the island of Ireland there are still a number of barriers to a truly egalitarian society**
- **In the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, our governments have been slow to address serious issues of inequality, many of which are still written into our legislation.**
- **The fight for an island of equals is the responsibility of every citizen.**

Congress further believes:

- **Students across the island are at the forefront of campaigning on issues of equality such as abortion rights and reproductive justice, equal marriage and against the MSM blood ban.**
- **Women students, LGBT students, Disabled students and Black students in our institutions all face discrimination both in their time at college and in wider society.**
- **Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism have no place in the Ireland that we envision.**
- **Cross-border solidarity between students is a cornerstone of the student movement on across the island and that our power as a campaigning voice comes from our unity.**

Congress mandates:

- The USI officer board to ensure equality issues are at the heart of a campaign influencing candidates and voters before the general election
- The VP Equality and Citizenship and VP Campaigns to work with the NUS-USI President and the relevant liberation officers in Northern Ireland to support campaigns in the struggle for equality.
- The USI officer board to support NUS-USI and students' unions in the north in the campaigns before the General Election 2015 and Assembly election 2016.

14 EQ 1 WORKING WITH MATURE STUDENTS

Congress notes:

The direct benefit for mature students attending The Mature Student Convention.

Congress further notes:

That the convention being held at a national or regional level is often inaccessible for mature students.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance and the Vice President for Welfare to work on a joint online campaign aimed at providing specific information and skills training for mature students.

Congress further notes:

The benefits of mature students networking at a regional and national level.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality to create an online forum for mature students.

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 is 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 1 USI SEAT ON THE BOARD OF MATURE STUDENTS IRELAND

Congress notes:

That this year the Equality officer has obtained a seat on the board of Mature Students Ireland.

Congress further notes:

The importance of this seat for maintaining good links with Mature Student Support Staff in all our Higher education institutions.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Equality Citizenship Officer to seek re-election to this board on a yearly basis.

12 EQ 2 LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Congress notes:

The 2010 Survey of Students with disabilities which was facilitated by USI and Ahead.

Congress further notes:

The importance of continuing a similar survey on yearly basis. This will allow us to evaluate how services are changing for students with disabilities across the country on a yearly basis. This will allow us to campaign and lobby more effectively.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Equality and Citizenship Vice president to work with ahead to conduct this survey on a yearly basis.

12 EQ 3 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRAINING DVD

Congress notes:

That this year USI has begun an extensive project in conjunction with ICOS, Irish Council for International Students and the Department of Education and Skills.

Congress further notes:

How important this project is for training staff working with international students in the HEI sector.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Equality and citizenship Vice president to continue to work on this project as a major aspect of their work over the coming year.

12 EQ 4 LGBT

Congress notes with grave concern:

That despite our claims to be a progressive nation we do not recognise the rights of LGBT members of the community as being fully and unequivocally equal to those of heterosexual orientation.

Congress further notes:

The failure to recognise equality in our legislation undeniably leads to a failure to see people as equals in our classrooms, our lecture theatres, our campuses and our workplaces.

Congress believes:

This failure to lead both directly and indirectly to a lesser standard of living for members of the LGBT community. That it leads to the denial of rights to children raised by same sex parents and to gross negligence on the part of the state by indirectly condoning bullying and torment for people who identify as LGBT.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President and the Campaigns officer to vehemently campaign on the full equalisation of rights regardless of sexual orientation, for full and equal marriage rights, full and equal adoption rights and for this Union to recognise LGBT members as full and equal members of society in recognition of the rights as laid out above.

Proposed amendment:

Under the sub heading 'Congress therefore mandates', remove 'The President & the Campaigns Officer' and replace with 'The President, the Vice-President for Campaigns and the Vice-President for Equality & Citizenship'.

12 EQ 5 STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Congress notes:

The excellent work done by USI in the area of representation for students with disabilities.

Congress further notes:

That, in the past, campaigns re students with disabilities have tended to focus primarily on students with physical disabilities.

Congress notes with regret:

The lack of attention which has been paid during this campaigning to students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, autism, etc.

Congress further notes with concern:

That, for students with learning disabilities, services in universities and institutes of technology can be sorely lacking in some cases, thus placing a great barrier between such students and their access to education.

Congress reaffirms the notion:

That every student has a right to access to third-level education.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to co-ordinate campaigns before March in each academic year on support services for students with learning disabilities and to lobby the Minister for Education to improve support services for students in these areas.

12 EQ 6 GENDER RECOGNITION LEGISLATION

Congress notes:

That the Government's commitment to introducing Gender Recognition Legislation is overdue and an important step in improving the lives of many Transgender people in Ireland.

Congress believes:

That the recommendations presented to the Minister for Social Protection by the Gender Recognition Advisory Group (GRAG) do not contain many of the concerns and issues raised by USI and other groups such as Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) and are not in line with the Yogyakarta Principles.

Congress further believes:

That the Irish Government has an opportunity to introduce Gender Recognition Legislation that is fair and reflects the real life lived experiences of many Transgender people in Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship and the VP for Campaigns to campaign for Gender Recognition Legislation that will reflect the real life lived experiences of Transgender people in Ireland and is line with the Yogyakarta Principles.

12 EQ 7 LGBT MENTAL HEALTH

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 GLEN and develop policies for LGBT mental health and best practice for promotion of positive mental health for LGBT people.

12 EQ 8 DIRECT ENGAGEMENT WITH STUDENTS ON LGBT CAMPAIGNS

Congress notes:

The important role the LGBT Campaign within USI has played in the on-going fight for equal rights for all LGBT people in Ireland and the world.

Congress further notes:

That through events such as USI Pink Training the LGBT Campaign has always been effective with engaging with students on grassroots level.

Congress notes in particular:

Campaigns focusing on Civil Marriage, the MSM Blood Ban, anti-homophobia and Gender Recognition Legislation campaigning have been successful but are still active and must remain so.

Congress believes:

That following the changes to the USI constitution and the merger of the LGBT Rights Officer Position into VP Equality and Citizenship role in order to continue the impact the course of LGBT rights in this country it is vital that forward planning takes place for the future LGBT Campaigns in consultation with students on a grassroots level.

Congress mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship and VP Campaigns to write a campaign plan for the LGBT Campaign year at the beginning of every term.

Congress further mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship to hold consultation days in early July with LGBT students to access what the relevant campaign issues are for that year and to devise the year plan in conjunction with the rest of the consultation.

12 EQ 9 GENDER NEUTRAL WELFARE CAMPAIGNS**Congress notes:**

That gender and sexuality norms can have significant negative effects on some students particularly in the LGBT community.

Congress also notes:

That these norms can be reinforced and propagated unintentionally by USI publications such as the illustrations on the SHAG Week Packs for 2012

Congress believes:

That USI should lead by example in getting society to treat all students equally

Congress therefore mandates:

That Vice President for Welfare seek the advice of The Vice President for Equality &

Citizenship to ensure that USI welfare campaign materials are gender neutral, in advance of 5th February 2013.

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 Síochána.

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

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

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.

10 MS 3 Peer Support for Mature Students

Conference notes:

The success of peer support networks across Irish Third Level Institutions

Conference also notes:

The difficulties faced by mature students returning to education

Conference believes:

That other mature students are best placed to understand these issues and support mature students in first year

Conference mandates:

The Mature Students Officer to lobby each college to establish a mature student's peer support network.

National Affairs

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 forbade 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 2 Review of Best Practice with Regard to MSM Blood Donation

USI Congress Notes:

The growing support for the change of blood donation criteria, with particular reference to MSM criteria.

USI Congress Recognises:

- **3,000 donations are needed every week**
- **Over 1,000 people receive transfusions every week in Ireland**
- **Only 3% of the Irish population give blood, providing blood for a population of over 4 million**
- **Only 5% of the Irish population eligible to give blood do so**

USI Congress further Notes:

That many other countries and states, such as recently the United States of America, have changed their policy regarding the donation of blood by MSM donors. Sexual orientation screening negates the possibility of many potential blood donors based on outdated evidence and research.

USI Congress Affirms:

Where possible it is best to use existing evidence and research to inform decisions and stances upon issues.

15 NA 3 Relationships with Trades Unions

Congress commends

the alliance building with education trade unions by USI Officerboard the past year.

Congress believes

that these relationships will be invaluable not only in the context of solidarity within the education sector but also in the context of the next General Election.

Congress believes

that the Education system as a whole deserves protection and that it is incumbent on stakeholder unions to fight against the egregious attack that has occurred during the austerity period.

Congress therefore mandates

the USI President to enter into negotiations with stakeholder trade unions in the primary,

secondary and third level education system towards building a common platform on Education for the next General Election. Proposed USI Motions

15 NA 4 Student Supports for Prisoners

Congress notes

That prisoners in the Irish prison system can find it difficult to qualify for student supports when applying to further or higher education.

Congress Further Notes

Improved access to education in the prison system means an increasing number of people are applying to go to college while incarcerated or upon release and a lack of access to supports is acting as a barrier to this.

Congress Mandates

The VP AAQA to work with the relevant bodies to alleviate and remove these restrictions.

15 NA 5 Traveller ethnicity

Congress notes

That Ireland's statutory human rights and equality bodies including the Irish Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority have concluded that Travellers fulfill the relevant sociological and anthropological criteria for recognition as a distinct ethnic group.

Congress also notes

That Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic minority in Britain, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and as separate from non-traveller Irish people.

Congress further notes

The recommendations and findings emanating from the Council of Europe and the United Nations calling on the State to recognise travellers' ethnic status.

Congress believes

That the State cannot continue to deny Travellers their right to self-identify as members of an ethnic group.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to engage in a campaign calling on the Irish government to recognise the ethnic status of Irish Travellers.

15 NA 6 Debt write-down for Ireland

Congress acknowledges:

That the Union's core principles of education as a public good, equity of access and equality of opportunity, among the funding of other essential public services require a significant investment on the part of the state.

Congress notes with grave concern:

The extent to which the Irish state and its people have been saddled with EU-wide debt, accounting for €64bn in total.

Congress also notes with concern:

The lack of progress within government on this level of debt and the impact in particular that this has on the ability of the state to address the funding deficit in higher education.

Congress affirms:

Its opposition to the way in which Ireland has been disproportionately hindered by the total debt of the European Union.

Congress supports:

calls for an EU-wide conference on debt relief, akin to the one that spurred on the Marshall Plan after the Second World War and provided debt relief for Germany.

Congress mandates:

The VP Campaigns and President to lobby and campaign in opposition to the grossly unfair debt imposed on Ireland by the ECB, the EU and the IMF, with a view to working alongside like-minded organisations to achieving a debt-write down.

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.

15 NA9 Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions) Bill

Congress notes:

The Criminal Justice (Spent Convictions) Bill 2012 has seemed to have fallen by the way side since the resignation of the former Minister for Justice. The proposed Bill would allow certain convictions to become "Spent" after a period of between 3 and 7 years. Simply put the Bill

would allow people convicted of crimes that carry non-custodial sentences to act as if their convictions had not existed.

Congress further notes:

The limitations placed upon people that received convictions' for minor offences. Even with a minor offence people can be impeded in gaining Visas for certain countries and can also detrimentally affect their employment prospects throughout their lifetime.

In Ireland we currently punish people for life no matter how minor the offence committed. This legislation is of enormous importance to the thousands of people in Ireland who have difficulty accessing work, education/training and even home insurance for one stupid mistake, usually made when they were younger (aged 18-21), for which they received a conviction such as a fine or probation, and for which they continue to be punished for the rest of their lives.

This legislation is not about letting people off; it is about giving people a second chance, after they have served their punishment (whether a fine, probation, community service or custodial sentence) and after they have desisted from offending behaviour for a period of 3-7 years. It is in everybody's interest that society encourages people to move on from offending behaviour.

Congress mandates

the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the current Minister for Justice to put this Bill to the Dáil so that it may be passed and written into legislation.
introduced.

Congress Mandates:

Both the VP AAQA and the VP Equality and citizenship to investigate the experiences of international students on Irish campuses and prepare a document outlining best practices (nationally and/or internationally) of encouraging international student engagement in the Irish Student Movement and in the student experience in general. The documents recommendations should be submitted for discussion and agreement from MOs within the first two national councils in the academic year

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 3 CORPORATION TAX IN IRELAND

Congress notes:

That the corporation tax in Ireland stands at 12.5%

Congress further notes:

That many companies do not pay this rate of tax

Congress notes:

The potential damage raising the corporation tax could have on investment in the country.

Congress recognises:

That increasing the corporation tax, based on the current system, would likely not yield a proportionate tax take.

Congress mandates:

The USI to lobby the government to bring about a situation corporations pay a closer to rate of 12.5% Corporation tax which is already quite low by comparison to other nations.

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 5 CROKE PARK AGREEMENT

Congress notes:

That current USI policy calls for the re-negotiation of the Croke Park agreement, while still endeavouring to protect the rights of public sector employees.

Congress believes:

That a situation has developed whereby new entrants to the public service are paid significantly less than those employed prior to the signing of the Croke Park Agreement, in order to ensure protection for current workers.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to lobby that as part of these re-negotiations that the pay gap and inequities which have now formulated between newer entrants and those staff previously in place should be addressed.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to take a stance that across the entire public service, not just in Higher Education, that the unfair imbalance and treatment of young people and graduates be looked at as a priority.

13 NA 6 RESEARCH INTO THE CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS OF THE CURRENT CRISIS

Congress mandates

Officerboard to lobby the government to initiate and release funds to fund PhD scholarships who would look into both causes/solutions of the current crisis and debt reduction.

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 leibhéal 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 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.

11NA 6 MINIMUM WAGE

Congress notes:

That students lucky enough to secure part-time employment to supplement their income while engaged in education often earn the minimum wage.

Congress condemns:

The decision of the outgoing Government to cut the minimum wage level to €7.65 per hour.

Congress further notes:

That this decreased wage will have severe impacts on the delicate balance between academic study and work, and will force many students to work even longer hours to the detriment of their academic performance.

Congress therefore mandates Officer Board:

To lobby and campaign for the restoration of the minimum wage to its pre-2010 level.

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

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

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 UO8 Student Engagement with TDs

CONGRESS NOTES:

Both the importance and the current shortfall in a desired level of student engagement with TDs.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Regional Officers and Vice President for Campaigns to organise in conjunction with relevant MOs a Questions & Answers forum where students can question TDs on topics nominated by the local MO.

17 UO9 Marketing Skills Training

CONGRESS NOTES:

The need for officers in National Council to have skills to be capable of using design, knowledge of design, branding, marketing and other communications strategic planning.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

The facilities available to provide software and spaces for formalised training and the skills available from students who could provide this type of training.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Chairperson of the Entertainments Committee to hold training on design, branding and digital media before September every year.

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 consultation process with students and the USI National Council in terms of which areas should be covered within this manual.

17 UO17 Comms specific training

CONGRESS NOTES

that the Communications training at USI events is limited and often very introductory.

CONGRESS MANDATES

USI Officerboard to hire trainers for specific communications training to be given to relevant officers

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 UO21 Regional planning days

CONGRESS NOTES:

That the work of the Regional Officers is paramount in supporting and communicating the goals and objectives of the Union of Students in Ireland.

CONGRESS BELIEVES:

That to continue successes of USI and to continue great communication, that USI should co-ordinate Regional planning days to allow USI be more connected to the problems, issues and spirit of MOs.

CONGRESS MANDATES:

The Regional Officers to coordinate regional planning days with the Region to set the priorities of the year for USI but also for Member Organisations.

17 UO22 Trans* Training for Officers

CONGRESS NOTES:

Officers may be unaware of the inequalities faced by trans* students whom they represent. It is often the case that officers are unsure how to best support their trans* students.

CONGRESS FURTHER NOTES:

Educating officers can often fall to students who identify within the trans* community which can be a strain on them.

CONGRESS APPLAUDS:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship recent efforts to open Pink Training to higher numbers of Students' Union officers as allies and mentors.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to organise trans* awareness training in partnership with relevant professional advocacy groups (for eg TENI and BelongTo) for SU officers to be provided each year.

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 UO26 Entertainment Committees at National Council

CONGRESS NOTES

There are many entertainment officers in Students' Unions and officers who take responsibility for entertainment in their MO around the country

CONGRESS NOTES WITH CONCERN

That there is not always a suitable forum for entertainment officers and other officers who take responsibility for entertainments to discuss experiences and gain support from other entertainment officers.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES

The USI President to ensure that a meeting of the Entertainments committee takes place at every National Council.

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 UO 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 UO 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.

UO 16 Casework Training at SUT ~ Referred back to the next meeting of National Council

Proposed by the Southern Regional Committee

Congress notes:

Full time sabbatical officers deal with a significant number of students during their time in office.

Congress further notes:

Officers are not trained adequately in how to deal with difficult students /situations like bereavements, suicide, sexual & mental health, drugs and basic legal advice.

Congress mandates

USI VP for Welfare to provide a substantial training for all full-time sabbaticals in dealing with difficult situations/students. The training should be ran as part of SUT (Student Union Training)

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:

- a) Review the democratic procedures of the organisation including but not limited to:
 - I. Officer Board elections
 - II. Committee elections & nominations
 - III. Oversight of all areas reviewed.
- b) Consult with members of the reviewed committees on said committees' operations.
- c) Investigate to what extent the National Council is aware of such procedures.
- d) 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

The 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 Board Officer 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 UO1 Comparative Research

Congress recognises

There are certain areas of similarity between MO organisations in relation to facilities, student issues and other practices.

Congress further recognises

There are often challenges associated with addressing these issues, without comparative research to illustrate best practice in other Higher Education Institutions.

Congress believes

That the area of conducting and presenting research between MOs is a lengthy, challenging process requires fine-tuning to be most effective

Congress further believes

Comparative Research will be conducted and presented more efficient manner if this task is assigned to a designated member of Officer Board

Congress therefore mandates

That the President assigns the area of Comparative Research to a member of Officer Board, who shall coordinate Comparative Research on behalf of USI and MO's regarding best practice in key aspects of union operations.

15 UO2 Part time officer training

USI Congress Notes:

Part time officers play an important role in every Student Union. These Officers are essential to the growth and development of the student movement.

USI Congress further Notes:

That there are numerous, similar, motions mandating USI to conduct various Part Time Officer training.

USI Congress Believes:

Training is key to the standard of work done by the Part Time Officers. Both the Union and campaigns run by USI and individual SU's are strongest with unity and training.

USI Congress therefore Deletes the Motions:

14 /Uo 14, 13/ Uo 13, 09/Uo 11

USI Congress Mandates:

All members of the USI Officer Board to provide appropriate training relevant to their area for all Part Time Officers throughout the country. To create unity, the Officer Board shall also create an online network for Part Time Officers throughout the country. Both mandates are to be completed by the end of the first semester each year.

15 UO3 Students' union staff training

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 two day 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 UO6 Regional Events to National Campaigns

Congress Notes

Many USI Campaigns and their launches are located in Dublin due to its accessibility for MOs, Media and Politicians.

Congress also notes

This can remove a regional and local focus from national campaigns

Congress therefore mandates

The USI VP Campaigns, VP BMW and VP for Southern Region to co-ordinate local and regional campaigns events to compliment national campaigns, where appropriate.

Amendment submitted by the VP BMW:

Replace clause 'Congress therefore mandates' with:

Congress therefore mandates

The USI VP Campaigns, VP for Welfare, VP BMW and VP for Southern Region to co-ordinate local and regional campaigns events to compliment national campaigns, where appropriate.

15 UO7 USI Election Process

Congress Notes

That information in relation to procedures around running for a position on Officer Board is not readily available to Member Organisations and that ambiguity around the regulations and election procedure could discourage potential candidates from running.

Congress Further Notes

That currently there is no limitation on spending for Officer Board campaigns. This may create uncertainty around the financial implications of running for an Officer Board position and work to further discourage potential candidates.

Congress therefore mandates

USI Officer Board to make regulations and procedures relating to Officer Board elections readily available to Member Organisations before commencement of the 2015/2016 Academic Year.

Congress further mandates

All of Officer Board to introduce a spending limit of €350 for all campaign materials

15 UO8 Supporting Student Media

Congress recognises

The fantastic work being done by student journalists and student media in Ireland.

Congress notes

That USI brought back one edition of The Voice magazine which was distributed in Freshers' packs in 2014.

Congress believes

That USI could do more to support student journalism and student media.

Congress mandates

The USI President to organise a meeting in a central location and invite all USI members working in student media and all USI members who are editors of student publications to attend. This meeting will serve as a networking event for student media and will allow USI officers to flag the timeline of national events for the year with student media. This meeting should take place before September 30th each year.

Congress also mandates

The USI President to develop an online version of 'The Voice'. This will act as a centralised hub and showcase for student media and will allow student journalists to share articles, blogs, videos, and podcasts. The website will be maintained and updated by USI. The website will also contain information on media awards and media grants that students can apply for.

15 UO9 Promotional Packs

Congress Notes:

That the USI distribute thousands of promotional packs for campaigns including and not limited to SHAG Week , Mental Health Week , Fresher Packs etc.

Congress Further Notes:

That MO's have no knowledge of the cost involved and the unit pricing of such packs.

Congress Believes:

That communication is vital in the deliverance and pricing of such packs onto MO campuses

Congress Mandates:

The USI President and related Officer board members to release itemised cost analysis of all materials distributed to MOs for Campaigns/SHAG Week/Mental Health Week etc .

15 UO10 DUBLIN STUDENT BALL

Congress notes:

That when done effectively, Students' Union events can be a great social window for students and an introduction into the wider SU identity.

Congress also notes:

That there is great scope for collaboration among SUs that are in close proximity to one another, and that a common identity among students in Dublin could be useful.

Congress also notes:

The saturation of event promoters in Dublin and other built up areas can often make it tough for SUs to run cost-effective events.

Congress mandates:

The Officer Board member with responsibility for the Dublin Region to investigate the feasibility of arranging a USI student ball in support of the national charity in the Dublin region, making use of MO Events officers, event management students and student acts.

15 UO11 Legislation working group

Congress notes

That a large number of mandates in the USI Policy manual require officer board to lobby on various issues, particularly in relation to government. These mandates can often require a change in legislation in order to be completed.

Congress further notes

Many organisations engage consistently with the legislative process to achieve their stated aims. USI has done this on an infrequent basis. Engaging with this process more frequently will allow USI to be more effective for its members.

Congress Recognises

That capacity of USI to engage with this may be limited without relevant expertise or training.

Congress Mandates

The USI President, or their nominee, to establish and chair a legislation working group with responsibility to provide training to interested members. Furthermore to provide information to national council on the process and direct them towards relevant legislation where appropriate.

Congress Further Mandates

The working group to update national council on the initiatives and activities it undertakes and to take instruction from national council.

15 UO13 Mature student supports

Congress Notes:

The high increase in the numbers of mature students attending third level education and the difficulties they face.

Congress also notes:

The success of peer supports such as Mature Student Convention provided by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship across Irish Third Level Institutions Students' Unions.

Congress further notes:

The benefits of having a mature student officer be it fulltime or part-time in each MO

Congress is aware:

The benefits to mature students in holding a Mature Student Conference and the development of mature student officer be it fulltime or part-time in each MO, with support provided by the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to continue their work in the development of a mature student officer be it fulltime or part-time in each MO.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to hold a Mature Student convention to take place annually in the first semester of each academic year.

15 UO13 International Students participation:

Congress notes:

The importance of international students and the broad and diverse communities they bring to Irish Institutions.

Congress further notes with concern:

That international students may at times feel isolated from the Irish students and this issue needs to be addressed.

Congress Understands:

That international students face different issues and interact with institutions in different ways to Irish residence students.

Congress Identifies:

Our membership to European Students Union contains a wealth of information on issues pertaining to the needs of visiting and international students.

Congress Mandates:

Both the VP AAQA and the VP Equality and citizenship to investigate the experiences of international students on Irish campuses and prepare a document outlining best practices (nationally and/or internationally) of encouraging international student engagement in the Irish Student Movement and in the student experience in general. The documents recommendations should be submitted for discussion and agreement from MOs within the first two national councils in the academic year

15 UO18 Student manifesto ahead of the next general election

Congress notes:

That there will be a General Election no later than April 2016.

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 ahead of the next general elections, as part of the wider national campaign. The rollout of this should be a priority for the Campaigns Working Group and Campaigns Sub-Committee.

15 UO19 Casework Recording Best Practice Policy

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.

in key aspects of union operations.

15 UO21 National Council Decentralisation

Congress notes

that National Council was concerned at the level of disaffection felt by some MO's in regards to the centralisation of national council, and believed that this issue could have a negative effect constituting an emergency on the overall membership of USI.

Congress recognises

that the model of centralisation proposed at last year's congress was meant to solve issues around MO's travel time to and from remote areas.

Congress realises

that although a good idea, the practicalities and cost of hosting USI national councils in hotels in a truly centralised location is not a feasible option.

Congress notes

that the previous model of national council hosting was unfair to some colleges some of the time, whereas the new centralised structure was unfair to some colleges all of the time.

Congress acknowledges

that although we cannot return to the previous system, we must have an adequate solution that serves the interests of all members.

Congress Mandates

The President to ask MO's to apply to host each individual National Council, with fair operation, ensuring that a full cycle of the four regions must be concluded before an MO from a previous host region may reapply.

Congress further mandates

that these applications to host must be circulated by the USI President to all MO Presidents. The USI President should then facilitate a binding vote on the applications.

15 UO23 Regional Issues

Congress Notes:

That there is too few opportunities to discuss Regional Issues at National Council besides within a Working Group.

Congress Believes:

That regions can feel isolated due to USI being centered in Dublin, and regional Issues are not dealt with in time

Congress Further Believes:

That Regional Councils will promote and engage MOs further and be less costly for MOs.

Congress Mandates

The Regional Officer to host regional councils within the region with the aim of submitting a report to council.

9C CARRIED RED SCRIPT TO BE REMOVED

15 UO28 3rd Party Providers

Congress notes:

The 11 Member Unions of NUS-USI from Further Education and Higher Education Institutions in the North.

Congress further notes:

That by virtue of the Tri-Lateral agreement that these members are also members of USI

Congress believes that:

While the majority of MOs and Officer Board are based in The South, no member should be disadvantaged because of the jurisdiction in which they are based.

Congress mandates:

USI Officer Board to ensure that wherever 3rd Party Services, Materials or Contact Information is provided to any MO that does not operate both North and South of the Boarder that a viable alternative is provided for whichever part of the island that the organisation does not operate in.

15 UO29 Campaign to encourage participation in full time Students' Union elections

Congress notes

The difficulty in getting students to engage with full time SU elections

Congress Further notes

The work already being done by MOs trying to increase participation

Congress applauds

The work being done with the 'Women for Election' campaign

Congress mandates

The VP for Campaigns to work with MOs in running a 'ready-made' campaign to encourage overall participation nationally but also be able be interpreted locally for individual MOs in full time elections and to equip them with the skills necessary to do so but also, to provide the support, aid and advice to MOs in preparing their own local election campaigns.

15 UO 30 USI Transparency and Engagement:

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.

15 UO 31 Utilising Student Expertise within the Union

Congress notes:

As an organisation representing over 356,000 students, USI has much considerable specialised work outsourced to external contractors, for example design and translations, ect.

Congress further notes:

That Ireland has one of the highest youth unemployment figures in the EU.

Congress Mandates:

Officerboard to seek to have this specialised work, particularly design and translation work, where practicable, contracted to members of the union to undertake.

15 UO 32 National Charity

Congress notes

The importance of USI and Member Organisations engaging with charities each year by contributing, and giving back to the wider community.

Congress commends

The efforts made by students to raise money, volunteer and raise awareness by means of RAG appeals and other campaigns.

Congress also notes

That the charity selection process for appeals varies across Member Organisations.

Congress further notes

That due to USI being an overall body with no exclusive members separate to those within Member Organisations it can be difficult to raise money for the National Charity as the onus is left on the full time USI officers.

Congress mandates

That the Vice President for Welfare identify a number of charity themes to be presented with example charities at Congress each year to be voted on by congress with the intention that Member Organisations encourage their student body to nominate charities which fit within this theme so that an overall total can easily be compiled of monies raised across the country.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Welfare, to compile a briefing document for Member Organisations on best practices to propose a charity in their own Unions which would include details on; how to propose a charity, how the voting will happen and who gets to vote so as to achieve as fair and transparent result each year. This is to be distributed not latter than the second National Council of the year.

15 UO 33 1916 Commemoration

Congress Notes:

The importance of the 1916 commemorations to the people of Ireland, and in particular, young people.

Congress further notes:

That the celebrations ought to be a celebration of our shared heritage

Congress Mandates:

Officerboard to work with various stakeholders, to ensure that the members of the union are represented in any commemorations, due to take place. And to aid any MO's as regard to any local events planned to take place.

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 1 CODES OF CONDUCT

Congress recognizes:

That there can often be disagreement and conflict within Students' Unions, and that there should ideally be a system in place to deal with such situations.

Congress notes:

That the behavior of elected Students' Union officers can be seen to reflect the behavior of the student body of that college as a whole.

Congress mandates:

The USI Officerboard to compile a proposed Code of Conduct for both the USI Officerboard and the Member Organisations, which the Member Organisations would have the option of adopting within their own organisation. This Code should be completed and presented to National Council by 31st December 2012.

12 UO 2 PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL SENT OUT TO MO'S

Congress notes:

Throughout the year a number of campaigns will require promotional material to be sent out to MO's.

Congress recognises:

In the past there have been a significant proportion of materials wasted unnecessarily.

Congress mandates the Vice President for Campaigns:

To review in the first three months of their term the amount of materials each MO will need per campaign and ensure they adhere to this during the year.

12 UO 5 SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

Congress notes:

Employers are seeking graduates with skills and experience gained outside of the classroom. The National Strategy for Higher Education states repeatedly that generic and transferable skills are essential for our future workforce and must be developed by the student alongside their academic learning.

Congress also notes:

The skills available in the collective student body are vast and impressive. USI undertakes and runs a huge number of campaigns covering a wide variety of topics each year which requires research and preparation. USI Officers are expected to keep up to date with legislation affecting students.

Congress further notes:

That successful summer internship programmes have been run in local MO's in July and August 2011. This programme elevated the workload of the sabbatical officers, allowed the students involved to gain valuable insights into the running of an organisation and development of essential generic skills and the cost to run the programme was very low. Work included website development, national policy reviews, campaign planning and class representative system review.

Congress mandates:

The President to co-ordinate a summer internship programme to be completed by September 30th 2012 in consultation with MO's who have successfully run programmes.

12 UO 7 FURTHER EDUCATION STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Congress notes:

That the provisions in the proposed Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Bill 2011 would create a single agency from the functions previously assigned to HETAC, FETAC, NQAI and IUQB. This consolidation impacts on student representation as USI should be recognised as the sole national student representative body for students at all levels and in each sector of further and higher education.

Congress notes:

That work has progressing by recent Education Officers and Area Officer in the field of Further Education Student Representation, but that this Union currently is ill-equipped to deal with the significant demands that this places on the Union.

Congress asserts and acknowledges:

Its moral obligation to provide the means for students in Further Education to represent themselves to their own institutions, to national agencies, and to this Union to the same extent as students in higher education.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP for AA & QA to organise the creation of a Further Education Student Representative Sub-group of USI, made up of officers of Students' Unions, Representative Committees and Guilds in colleges of further education nationally. This Sub-group will be responsible for the promotion of, affiliation of, training, development and liaison between the Union and students in Further Education.

Congress further mandates:

The Education Officer and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance Elect to develop a five year implementation strategy for USI's FE sub-group, leading towards a fully autonomous FE campaign within USI, if appropriate at the end of that five year period.

Congress acknowledges:

Its own dearth of experience or expertise in this field, and

Congress additionally mandates:

The President to allocate staff resources, as resources permit, to professionally manage this strategy, implement its recommendations and deliver its aims until such a time as the Union may elect a person to perform this role.

12 UO 10 PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS FOR THE USI

Congress notes:

The importance of producing promotional goods to promote the USI in each Member Organisation.

Congress further notes:

The importance of producing these goods in a timely fashion to coincide with Freshers Weeks across the country.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns, the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region and the Vice President for the Southern Region to produce such goods by the end of July for the next 3 years.

12 UO 11 ACCESS & INCLUSIVITY

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.

12 UO 12 MATURE STUDENTS CONFERENCE

Congress notes:

The increase in the number of mature students returning to 3rd level education, and welcomes the national mature student conference held this year.

Congress further notes:

The national mature student conference will have less of an impact on mature students if it is held near the end of semester 2.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship Officer to hold the mature student conference in Semester 1.

12 UO 13 VIDEO DEBATES

Congress notes:

The increased level of interest amongst our grass root members in USI and the election process for new Officerboard candidates.

Congress further notes:

Trinity College Dublin Students' Union hold a very open and public Election Process that is well documented and welcomes interaction from all members along with a debate between candidates held.

Congress therefore mandates:

USI Elections Subcommittee to organise video debates between Officerboard candidates at least 2 weeks prior to the Election at Annual Congress.

12 UO 15 ESTABLISHMENT OF A USI WORKING GROUP FOR MEMBER ORGANISATION ADMINISTRATORS

Congress notes:

That USI provides many opportunities for Students' Unions to learn from one another, and share experiences, leading to a stronger student movement nationally.

Congress further notes:

That staff provide invaluable support and continuity to Students' Unions throughout the country, often with a breadth of knowledge, which stretches over many years.

Congress notes with regret:

That at present, there is no USI forum by which staff of Students' Unions can share information and experiences, for the benefit of Students' Unions and the student body.

Congress mandates:

The President to establish a working group of USI, which shall have membership consisting of the staff of each Member Organisation. The working group shall be chaired by a member of USI staff and shall regulate its own affairs, but shall operate within the policies and procedures of USI.

12 UO 19 LGBT SOCIETIES

Congress notes:

That the LGBT societies are the main source of contact and support for LGBT students.

Congress also notes:

The great work done by USI in providing Pink Training which supports the LGBT community.

Congress believes;

That this training is a great advert for USI reaching out to students across the country.

Congress also believes:

That all LGBT students (and indeed many non LGBT students) could benefit from attending Pink Training.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to make contact with all LGBT societies about Pink Training at least 4 weeks prior to the date for the event, and offer non-affiliate rates directly to the society where relevant.

12 UO 20 EQUALITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCH & HANDBOOK

Congress welcomes:

The creation of the new role of the Equality and Citizenship Officer.

Congress believes;

That the creation of this new role will provide USI with the opportunity to reshape and rebrand the USI Equality campaign.

Congress believes:

It is vitally important to raise awareness of the Equality campaign within USI and among the organisations and community groups that the Equality and Citizenship Officer will be liaising and working with.

Congress mandates:

The Equality and Citizenship Officer to organise an official re-launch event for the USI Equality campaign this autumn no later than November 1st.

Congress mandates:

The Equality and Citizenship Officer to fulfil the previous mandate of creating an Equality Handbook (09/UO 29) and to have this handbook ready to distribute at this launch.

Congress mandates:

The Equality and Citizenship Officer to ensure that representatives from all relevant organisations are invited to attend this launch.

12 UO 22 ÓGRA CONFERENCE

Congress notes:

The diverse range of political parties that exist in Ireland and acknowledges that many of these parties have Ógra branches operating in our members organisations.

Congress acknowledges:

That such a diverse organisation as USI represents members with a wide variety of political opinions and beliefs.

Congress mandates:

The President or Vice President Campaign of USI to attend all Ógra Conferences for the next three years when invited to do so for the next three years.

11 UO 1 MONEY MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Congress notes:

That student poverty and student financial difficulty has been more prevalent in the last 2 years than in previous years.

Congress further notes:

The complexity of financial difficulties can make it difficult for local welfare officers to provide accurate, useful information without proper training.

Congress mandates the Welfare Officer:

To provide money management training to the welfare officers at UOS or at an alternative date before the beginning of the Academic term.

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 3 LOBBY OF THE OIREACHTAS/PRE BUDGET SUBMISSION

Congress notes:

That USI puts forward Lobby of the Oireachtas and Pre-Budget Submission documents every year.

Congress further notes:

The importance of these two documents to the national union and national campaign.

Congress mandates the President:

To establish a taskforce at the first national council to advise the President on issues for inclusion for these documents.

11 UO 5 MEMBERSHIP WORKING GROUP

Congress notes:

That with the election of a new Government USI have 3 years to the next Local Elections and possibly 5 years to the next General Election, and thus a longer period before voter pressure can force pro-student concessions from political parties seeking election.

Congress believes:

That this period should be used for reviewing how USI engage and interact with its membership, with the view to creating a strong unified and informed student body that identifies itself with their national union as much as with their local CO.

Congress mandates USI Officer Board:

To create a Membership Working Group reporting to National Council, which would be allowed to co-opt people outside of the USI membership that may be of strategic importance in carrying out its work.

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.

11 UO 8 FRESHERS' PACKS

Congress notes:

That Students' Unions across the country distribute packs of sample products under the name "Freshers' Packs" to their incoming members as a gesture of welcome and as a positive first impression of the benefits of membership of their local Union.

Congress notes with concern:

The quality of product distributed by suppliers in recent years has been falling steadily, and the contents of many of the packs have included unsuitable material for students' unions.

Congress further notes:

The ongoing challenge of USI in articulating its purpose and existence to grass-roots members before major national campaigns.

Congress therefore mandates the President and Officerboard:

To investigate the possibility of sourcing the materials, supplying and distributing “Freshers’ Packs” to COs by September 2011 for consideration at the first National Council of the 2011 / 2012 academic year.

11 UO 9 PAYMENT OF AFFILIATION FEES

Congress notes:

That USI has numerous affiliated colleges.

Congress further notes:

That there are a minority of colleges who choose not to pay the USI affiliation fee.

Congress mandates Officer Board:

To investigate the plausibility of sanctions, including but not exclusive to, suspension or expulsion of those colleges from USI.

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 19 MANIFESTO UPDATES

Congress notes:

Important issues highlighted in the manifestos of elected members of officer board can be neglected as the year progresses.

Congress also notes:

The importance USI members place on the strength of the leadership of USI officer board and much of their confidence in an individual stems from the issues they pledge to attack/defend/promote in their manifestos.

Congress mandates:

Each member of officer board to outline the progress they have made on their manifesto issues at national council twice annually.

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 2 USI FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Congress notes:

Congress policy 13/A&F2, which calls for a five-year financial plan for USI to be presented to Congress 2014, to include a review of the affiliation fee structure and an aim to reduce affiliation fee dependence through increased income generation from other sources.

Congress further notes:

The USI Income Diversification Strategy, and reforms recommended by Finance Committee to enable tighter USI budgeting, passed by National Council this year.

Congress believes:

That it is a prudent and sensible approach for USI to regularly review financial strategy, and to plan ahead in terms of budgetary projections. This should include the development of a reserves policy and commercial strategy for USI, as well as identifying potential cost reductions.

Congress approves:

The Five-Year Financial Plan presented to Congress by the USI President.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to endeavour to implement this Plan, and meet the targets set out.

Congress further mandates:

The President to present an update on the implementation of this Plan at USI Annual Congress, and bring any proposed amendments or changes in strategy to the Plan to Congress for approval.

14 AF 3 USI INCOME DIVERSIFICATION STRATEGY

Congress welcomes:

The engagement of Venture Advancement to develop an Income Diversification Strategy for USI, subsequently approved by USI National Council.

Congress notes:

The existence of USI Member Services Ltd. as a vehicle for commercial projects and activity undertaken by USI outside of its core representative work.

Congress believes:

The implementation of this strategy and the initial recommended projects is fundamentally important to the future development of USI, in terms of meeting strategic financial targets, adding value to USI membership through the provision of services, and working towards the reduction in USI affiliation fees.

Congress approves:

- The USI Income Diversification Strategy
- The development of a web platform for a USI online 'Student Shop'
- A joint venture with Green IT for the sale of discounted refurbished laptops to students
- The 'USI Extra' Card

Congress mandates:

The USI President to take responsibility for the implementation of USI's Income Diversification Strategy and commercial targets, including the successful rollout of the approved projects.

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

13 AF 3 MOTION TO ESTABLISH WORKING GROUP TO INVESTIGATE COST OF CONGRESS

Congress notes:

The significant cost of Congress to Member Organisations and the economic limitations facing Students' Unions.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to establish a working group to investigate the costs of Congress and identify areas or actions which may result in savings for MOs.

The taskforce will invite the following individuals to participate:

- USI President
- USI General Manager
- 1 Member of Finance Committee
- 2 Members of National Council
- 1 Representative of Universities

EMERGENCY MOTIONS

14 EM 1 DEMONSTRATION AGAINST FORCED LABOUR SCHEMES

Congress welcomes:

The passing of motion UO 16 Job Bridge.

Congress has been made aware:

That a demonstration has been organised by youths wings of the trade union movement to take place on 12th April in Dublin against sanctions individuals who refuse to take a placement on Job Bridge and Gateway.

Congress mandates:

Officer board to support this demonstration.

14 EM 2 THE CENTRE

Congress notes with concern:

The recent airing of a comedic programme by RTE called 'The Centre' that takes aim at a number of social minorities.

Congress further notes:

The protest registered by the Irish trans* advocacy body TENI about the programmes highly negative, stereotyping and mocking attitude towards trans* people.

Congress recognises:

The USI has been a key voice in the fight for LGBT rights over the past number of decades and in particular its activism on trans* issues in recent years.

Congress believes:

That we must stand in solidarity with TENI against this transphobic programme aired by the national broadcaster.

Congress therefore mandates:

The USI President to make a formal complaint in line with Section 3.4.2 of the BCI Code of Programme Standards to RTE about this programme.

14 EM 3 WELFARE CAMPAIGN ON SELF-ESTEEM, SELF-CONFIDENCE & BODY IMAGE

Congress notes:

In the second week of March this year, TCDSU ran their first ever welfare campaign in relation to self-esteem, self-confidence and body image, Body & Soul week. Given the positive feedback about the campaign since the deadline for submissions of motions to congress has passed and the overall success of the campaign and the engagement of students in Trinity, this is a worthwhile campaign that should be rolled out on a national level.

Congress further notes:

That in a recent Council in TCD, class reps passed a motion to encourage incoming Welfare Officers in Trinity to organise a campaign raising awareness about self-esteem, self-confidence and body image.

Congress regrets:

That the Department of Health estimates that up to 200,000 people in Ireland may be affected by eating disorders and an estimated 400 new cases emerge each year, representing 80 deaths annually.

Further, there is overwhelming evidence, that body image is intrinsically linked with self-esteem. Our society's emphasis on how we look also affects the way people feel about themselves.

Congress therefore mandates:

USI VP Welfare to run a campaign specifically in relation to self-esteem, self-confidence and body image.

Congress further mandates:

USI VP Welfare to support and encourage MOs to implement similar campaigns in their own colleges.

14 EM 4 THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN- EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD

Congress notes:

The motion passed at this year's Congress (AAQA1) which adopts the NERI Discussion Paper on Higher Education as USI policy on third-level funding.

Congress recognises:

The importance of mobilising the student body to support the achievement of our desired policy and political aims for a publicly-funded Higher Education system, and the significant ideological crossroads we are now at regarding how we view Higher Education in Ireland.

Congress further notes:

That a National March or Demonstration has not been held by USI since 2011.

Congress adopts;

The Campaign 2014 strategy already passed by National Council, which sets out desired campaigning actions to enable us to achieve our political goals.

Congress mandates:

The USI President and Vice-President for Campaigns to organise a significant national event as part of this campaign which espouse, promote and celebrate the value and benefits of Higher Education to our economy and our society. This should take place no later than 9th October 2014.

Congress also mandates:

USI Officer Board to collaborate with like-minded organisations who support our funding position and see Higher Education as a public good, to include but not be exclusive to SIPTU, IMPACT, IFUT and the TUI.

14 EM 5 EQUAL MARRIAGE

Congress notes:

That [on the 29th of April](#) the Northern Ireland Assembly will debate a motion calling for equal marriage in Northern Ireland.

Congress believes:

That this motion is very closely aligned to USI policy and beliefs.

Congress mandates:

That the USI officer board actively lobbies members of the Northern Ireland Assembly in conjunction with their partners in the trilateral agreement, NUS and NUS-USI, in order to secure support for the motion.

Congress further mandates:

USI to have representation in addition to the President of NUS-USI in the Northern Ireland Assembly on the day of the vote.

14 EM 6 HUMAN RIGHTS

Congress asserts:

That USI has a responsibility to protect human rights internationally.

Congress notes:

That currently homosexuality is illegal in 86 countries.

Congress notes:

That Uganda's parliament has criminalised homosexuality as of February 24th and that internationally there are countries where the Q movement is regressing.

Congress believes:

That there are countries where the Q community do not receive as much media attention as high profile developments in Russia.

Congress mandates:

The president and VP of Equality & Citizenship to draw attention to this issue in a campaign and to support and actively campaign for the decriminalisation of homosexuality internationally.

14 EM 8 POSTGRADUATE LOANS

Congress notes:

11/ ED 21 which called on USI to tackle the prohibitive cost of postgraduate study via a loan scheme.

Congress recognises:

The near-removal of all postgraduate grants and maintenance in 2012, which has made accessing postgraduate education even more difficult for many students.

Congress reaffirms:

USI's commitment to a fully public-funded Higher Education system at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Congress acknowledges:

The current situation is completely unsustainable, and requires immediate action now to make postgraduate study more affordable and accessible in the short-term.

Congress applauds:

USI's negotiations with credit institutions in relation to this area this year in conjunction with the Department and the HEA, which has recently led to a much more affordable product being negotiated with Bank of Ireland.

Congress mandates:

USI Officer Board to endorse and promote this product in partnership with Bank of Ireland in order to ensure that it is available to students considering postgraduate education, as it vastly improves the current situation facing students who are forced to take out a loan in order to fund their postgraduate study.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to review the postgraduate funding situation on an annual basis, and seek to improve affordability and access to postgraduate study on an ongoing basis.

This should involve in the first instance lobbying for additional public funding for postgraduate education including the reintroduction of all postgraduate grants and maintenance, and in the second instance seeking to improve the terms and conditions of loan offerings with Bank of Ireland or another provider.

14 EM 9 UKRAINIAN CRISIS

Congress notes:

On 20 March, Ielyzaveta Shchepetylnykova, President of the Ukrainian Association of Student Self-governments, briefed the 27th European Students' Convention on the current state of affairs in the Ukraine. Following this briefing, the USI delegation joined a candlelight vigil to honour the victims of the Maidan in Ukraine.

Congress understands:

Demonstrations in Ukraine started in late November 2013 when the Ukrainian government refused to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union and accepted to join the Russian customs union instead. Many of the students, academics and young people in Ukraine have been significantly impacted by the unrest and violence resulting in injuries and deaths on both sides.

Congress believes:

That Ukraine's democratic development must be under the control of Ukrainians, with the support only upon request of the entire international community.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to communicate to the leaders of Russia, Europe and the wider international community, that we stand in solidarity with our fellow students in Ukraine and demand an immediate end to all interference in Ukraine.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to call for young people and students in the Ukraine to be protected and supported as the country continues to develop democratically and economically.

14 EM 10 IRISH JUSTICE SYSTEM

Congress notes:

The recent revelations regarding illicit Garda surveillance, including misuse of the Pulse system.

Congress further notes:

The apparent inaction on this issue from the Government.

Congress applauds:

The actions of Garda whistleblowers Maurice McCabe and John Wilson, which have led to the uncovering of widespread corruption within An Garda Síochána.

Congress affirms:

The purpose of the justice system in any free democracy is to fairly protect the rights of citizens, including the right to privacy.

Congress believes:

The Irish Justice system has clearly failed in this regard, and action must be taken to rectify this.

Congress mandates:

The USI President to call for an Independent Garda Commission to be established as expediently as possible, which has appropriate regulatory powers and oversight so as to ensure this situation is not allowed to occur in the future.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President to send correspondence to the Department of an Taoiseach and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform outlining the concerns of USI Congress, and to the whistleblowers communicating our support.

14 EM 11 SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE PLACEMENT SCHEME

Congress notes:

The proposed introduction of a Social Work Graduate Placement Scheme, similar to the one currently in place for nurses, by the new Child and Family Agency.

Congress is deeply concerned:

That these graduate will be placed on a salary below that of starting salaries negotiated by trade union with the government.

Congress fears:

That the scheme will drive down salaries within the social work sector and would install a new layer of cheap labour within the profession.

Congress mandates:

USI Officer Board to support the call to withdraw this proposal and actively engage with SWAN (Social Work Action Network) Ireland to campaign on this issue.

14 EM 12 INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEF**Congress notes:**

That the USI delegation that attended ESU 27 on March 21st reported that USI is significantly underperforming on the international platform.

Congress recognises:

The importance of educating national council on International and European affairs and to perform better internationally.

Congress further recognises:

The importance of National Council members being made aware of developments on an international level.

Congress notes:

That National Council should have direct input into international policy and decision making

Congress further notes:

That Press Releases and Reports on European developments should be circulated after any meeting of the European Student Union

Congress believes:

That motivational letters from any European Student Union candidates should be circulated in advance of Board Meetings

Congress further believes:

That national council should select the candidates they wish to represent them on a ESU executive committee.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to facilitate National Council in selecting their ESU representatives.

Congress further mandates:

The international representative to circulate regular reports and press releases to members of national council at least after every meeting of ESU.

14 EM 13 Board Meeting Mandate in advance of BM66

Congress notes:

That the USI delegation that attended ESU 27 on March 21st reported that USI is significantly underperforming on the international platform.

Congress recognises:

The value of information and supporting evidence when pushing a student centric agenda through the democratic institutions where we represent our students.

Congress also recognises:

An opportunity at a European level for a comparative study that would determine best practice in terms of what is the most effective student representational system.

Congress therefore mandates:

That the President & Vice President AAQA convene a working group in advance of the 66th Bard Meeting of the European Student Union for the purpose of preparing a motion that would mandate ESU to carry out such a study.

Congress further mandates:

That such working groups with a general focus are convened in advance of any Board Meeting as long as we are members of ESU.

13 EM 1 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Congress notes:

The recent publication of the list of properties eligible for exemption from the property tax as described by the Finance (Local Property Tax) Bill 2012.

Congress further notes:

While Part 30f of the Act makes the individual or institution liable for payment of the tax, it is inevitable that the charge will be passed on to students

Congress mandates:

The President and Welfare Officer to lobby the Minister for Education & Skills and the Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government for the inclusion of student residences as an eligible exemption

13 EM 2 SHOULD WOMEN BE OUTSIDE THE HOME

Congress notes:

That the front page of the Irish Examiner on the first day of the USI Congress (25th March 2013) led with the headline "Banks to demand mothers sacrifice their jobs"

In the article it tells us Personal Insolvency Service guidelines state that "where a person is working and paying for childcare as a consequence of his or her employment, the cost of childcare should not exceed the income from the employment"

Congress also notes:

That the day after Congress rejected all motions dealing with female participation in politics that The Irish Independent (27th March 2013) had a front page article

"Working mums could be asked to give up their jobs in debt deal- Varadkar" attributed to one of the youngest Cabinet Ministers and widely tipped future leader of Fine Gael.

Congress further notes:

That the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship had a submission supported by USI National Council for 15-16th of February 2013 from which she made a paper submission and was an invited speaker to the Constitutional Convention on the issue of Women in Politics and Article 41.2.1 on the 17th of February.

Congress understands:

That Article 41:2.1 states

"In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."

Congress supports:

The submission made to the Constitutional Convention by the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship which stated that

"The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) believes that symbolism is powerful. We believe that article 41 symbolically excludes women from life outside of the home. The current article places a symbolic limitation on women and implies that there is no life for women outside of the home. US/ strongly rejects the implications that this article has in terms of implied gender roles and its contribution to gender stereotyping in Ireland. Gender stereotyping is restrictive for all members of society. USI believes that this article is not reflective or in touch with 21st century life in Ireland. The Union of Students in Ireland is an inclusive organisation that values equality and diversity. One of our visions is an Ireland where there is equality between all genders."

Congress further notes:

In the same submission a number of facts were highlighted under the section entitled "Underrepresentation of females in public life in Ireland — the Facts

In 2012, a research piece was conducted by the USI Gender Equality Officer "UCC Students' Union had 21 sabbatical officers between the years of 2007-2012, 18 of which were male and just 3 were female. (just 14%). This issue of under—representation is often replicated across Students' Unions in Ireland.

Currently there are just 5 female Students' Union Presidents in USI (21%)

- Only 15% of the 166 Dáil seats are held by women
- Women account for just 16% of the members of local authorities
- The Republic of Ireland ranks 23rd place amongst 27 EU member states
- Men comprise 8 out of 10 Boardroom positions (OECD) (20% female)
- Women earn on average 17% less than men in Ireland

Congress accepts:

That there is a clear correlation between representative figures in student politics and national politics. That from these figures it is evident that in general there is a glass ceiling for women and minorities, which needs to be addressed.

Congress recognises:

There are exceptions to every case, but that when there are so few exceptions, the exception proves the rule.

Congress believes:

It is unacceptable that government ministers and financial institutions are making such statements and policy at the very time the Convention has recommended the amendment of this outdated article.

Congress further believes:

That Fianna Fail are correct when they say "it is particularly short-sighted that banks will be

given the power to demand working mothers give up their jobs"

And that Dublin West Labour TD Patrick Nulty is also correct in demanding that "Mr. Varadkar should immediately withdraw his insensitive remarks".

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to continue to promote the submission she made to the Constitutional Convention as USI policy, in absence of enough equality policy in this area.

The whole of USI officer board to completely reject the argument that a woman should be forced to stay at home, in any public fora where this issue raises its head. Women can rightfully choose to stay at home, as a man should be able, but it must be a choice and not coerced.

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to engage in more research and compilation of statistics of under-representation by various groups in USI and across all MOs, to help with institutional memory and further understanding of the reasons why.

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to explore various options to help increase participation in elections by all students — as voters, activists and candidates, but in particular by groups underrepresented in Students' Unions (including but not limited to female students, LGBT students, international students, immigrants/migrants and disability students).

13 EM3 GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH PROJECT

Congress notes:

The constructive and wide ranging outcomes of the workshop on graduate employment.

Congress welcomes:

The initiative of a joint research project between USI & ICTU, with the objective of combatting graduate unemployment.

Congress mandates:

The President to further efforts to engage Member Organisations and grassroots members in the consultation process and to report back to each national council on the progress of the project until its conclusion.

13 EM 4 SPUNOUT

Congress is appalled by:

The article in the Sunday Independent, entitled, 'Mulherin outrage at state sponsored orgy tips', printed Sunday March 23rd 2013. This article shows how our public representatives are out of touch with the young people of Ireland.

Congress welcomes:

The response from SpunOut 'Arm Young People with facts not fear' available at SpunOut.ie

Congress is deeply concerned:

Of the possible negative light that SpunOut has been brought into as a result of the Sunday

Independent article.

Congress supports:

SpunOut's evidence based approach to reaching out and educating young people on various aspects of life.

Congress therefore mandates:

- USI to condemn the article which has possible negative effects on SpunOut as an organisation and the work they do.
- USI to continue to work with SpunOut and to support the work they do in reaching out and educating the youth of Ireland.
- USI to reaffirm the importance of and its commitment to running sexual health campaigns and educating students on all aspects of sexual health.
- USI to call on the Minister of Health to recognise the invaluable service SpunOut provides and continue to support them.

12 EM 1 VOTING DAYS

Congress notes:

The Fine Gael and Labour parties condemning of the Government of the day for holding voting on weekdays during the term.

Congress further notes:

That student unfriendly voting days severely reduce turnout among students.

Congress condemns:

The decision to hold the upcoming referendum on the EU fiscal treaty on Thursday, May 31st 2012.

Congress notes with concern:

That the turnout among students will be hampered as a result.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Campaigns and President to lobby the Government for student friendly voting days for all elections and referenda so students can exercise their democratic right to vote.

12 EM 3 POLLING DATES

Congress notes:

That prior to the last General Election both Fine Gael and Labour called on the Government to hold polling dates on a weekend in order to facilitate students and other to exercise their democratic rights and vote.

Congress further notes:

The success of USI's 'Your Future, Your Vote' campaign.

Congress is outraged:

That in a blatantly cynical and hypocritical move, the parties now in Government have deliberately disenfranchised the very same voters they courted for support in advance of General Election 2012.

Congress mandates:

The President and Officerboard to run a register to vote campaign in advance of the Fiscal Treaty Referendum.

12 EM 4 CAPITAL ASSET TEST

Congress notes with alarm:

The recent statements of the Minister for Education of his intention to introduce a form of

capital assets test for the Higher Education Maintenance Grant Scheme.

Congress notes:

That while the value of a family owned asset may be high, it is not an indication of income of ability to pay for Higher Education.

Congress mandates:

The President and USI Officerboard to do all in their power to campaign against the introduction of any form of a capital assets test.

12 EM 5 CAP ON NUMBERS OF STUDENTS

Congress notes:

The recent statements of the Minister for Education in relation to the possibility of placing a cap on the numbers of students in Higher and Further Education in order to control costs.

Congress notes with alarm:

The immense damage that such a cap could cause to access to education especially given the continuing internationalisation of Higher Education.

Congress mandates:

The President and USI Officerboard to do all in their power to campaign against the introduction of any cap on the numbers of students in Higher and Further Education.

12 EM 6 MINISTERIAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS

Congress notes:

That Minister Ruairi Quinn, as the then Labour Party Spokesperson for Education, signed a pledge that his party, in government, would not increase fees. However since entering into Government he has broken that pledge and issued warning that he intends to increase the Student Contribution to €3,000 by 2015.

Congress notes:

That the President of USI issued an invitation to Minister Ruairi Quinn in advance of Annual Congress 2012 and that invitation was accepted, and then reneged upon.

Congress notes:

That the President did everything possible to facilitate Minister Quinn addressing Congress including rescheduling the date and time, and offering to arrange teleconference facilities, however Minister Quinn failed to accept any of these alternatives and come before USI Congress and explain his actions.

Congress mandates:

The President to convey to the Minister, at the next available opportunity, our condemnation of his failure to come before USI Congress and explain his actions.

11 EM 1 JAPANESE DISASTER

Congress notes:

The disaster that struck Japan recently

Congress regrets:

The pain and suffering that has been inflicted upon the people of Japan

Congress mandates officerboard:

To support any measures by the government to provide relief to these people.

11 EM 2 TRAGEDY IN JAPAN

Congress notes:

The recent tragedy in Japan

Congress is saddened:

By the loss of life and devastation

Congress mandates:

The area officers to organise a charity event in each region, with the benefits to be donated to victims of the tragedy.

11 EM 3 NORTHERN IRELAND FEES CAMPAIGN

Congress notes:

The fight against fees that is being led by NUS-USI and the COs in Northern Ireland

Congress further notes:

The statement by the minister responsible for higher education that he would freeze the fees level if sufficient funding is released from the NI executive

Congress therefore mandates the USI president:

To work alongside the NAO/NUS-USI president to bring about as much support as possible for the release of this funding to Higher Education.

10 EM 1 THE NATIONAL MATHEMATICS SYMPOSIUM

Congress notes:

The appalling state of the teaching of maths in the Republic of Ireland, as noted in a report and at the National Mathematics Symposium on the 16th of March 2010, and that over half of maths teachers in the Republic of Ireland only have one year of third level maths.

Congress believes:

That without proper focus on a vital skill such as maths graduates will be unable to compete internationally and domestically for jobs and opportunities.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Education Officer to lobby the new Minister of Education and Skills to ensure that adequate resources are put into the teaching of maths at second and third level.

10 EM 2 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Congress notes:

The recent reshuffle of Government ministers and the reorganisation of the Departments of state.

Congress notes with alarm and concern:

The breaking up of the Department of Education and Science resulting in the move of responsibility for research and educational innovation to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to release a statement opposing this change and asking that it be reversed.

10 EM 3 NEW FUNDING MODEL

Congress notes:

That three of the primary source of revenue for 3rd level institutes in the Republic of Ireland are: undergraduate numbers, research funding and international students.

Congress further notes:

That none of these sources bear a direct relation to the quality of teaching and learning at undergraduate or post-graduate level.

Congress notes with alarm:

That because of this situation institutions are actually encouraged to treat taught students as revenue generators to subsidise research.

Congress also notes:

This situation is resulting in a decline in the quality of teaching and learning in supports and facilities for taught students.

Congress also further notes:

That this competition for funding will worsen significantly given the recent division of funding responsibilities in the cabinet reshuffle.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Education Officer to lobby to bring in a new funding model which will be cognisant of the quality of teaching and learning as a factor in awarding funds to third level institutions.

10 EM 4 STUDENT HOUSING

Congress notes:

The motion passed at the 2010 Sinn Féin **Ard** Fheis which calls for compulsory university regulated accommodation for first year students living away from home.

Congress further notes:

That the complete text of Sinn Féin Ard Fheis motion 149 (Education) reads:

This Ard Fheis:

- Recognises the contribution of universities to the educational and academic life of the country.
- Acknowledges the negative experiences of communities such as the Holyland in South Belfast.
- is mindful of the potential for communities in North Belfast to suffer the same erosion with the relocation of the University of Ulster.

The Ard Fheis therefore adopts a framework policy for the protection of residential communities which neighbour universities, which contains the following components:

- Provision of sufficient university accommodation to meet demand, with compulsory university regulated accommodation for first year students living away from home.
- Compulsory landlord registration.
- Tighter control and regulation of houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs).

Conference recognises:

That as Sinn Féin are members of the government in the North and have the potential to be part of a future coalition in the south that this poses an immediate threat to students across the island of Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The USI President and Officerboard to actively oppose this policy by demonstrating that it is unfair, unworkable and unreasonably restricts a young person freedom of choice.

Congress further mandates:

The USI President and Officerboard to lobby Sinn Féin elected representatives, both North and South, to secure a reversal this policy.

10 EM 5 DOMESTIC & SEXUAL ABUSE

Congress notes:

That many students are, have been, and will become victims of sexual abuse in Ireland.

Congress mandates:

The Equality Officer to actively lobby for the increased awareness of the above issue, and of the supports available as well as the legal options for victims of abuse.

IRISH LANGUAGE

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 bhFeidhmeannas 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 bhFeidhmeannas 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 straitéis fórasach, 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 threoirínte 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 teoirínte seo a chur i bhfeidhm maidir le measúnú ar an nGaeilge ag leibhéal iarbhunscoile.

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 2 Comhdháil na Mic Léinn Ceilteach/ Celtic Students Conference

Aithníonn an Chomhdháil:

An tábhacht a bhaineann le comhoibriú le grúpaí seachtrach ach go háirithe NUS Alba agus NUS Cyrmu, i gcur chun cinn na teanga

Sainordaíonn an Chomhdháil:

Leas-Uachtarán na Gaeilge, obair leis na grúpaí seachtrach seo, chun smaointe a roinnt, chun comhdháil na Mic Léinn Ceilteach a thabhairt go hÉireann don chéad uair, agus chun na Cumann Gaelacha a bheidh lárnach san obair seo ar fad.

Congress Notes:

The importance that collaborations with external organisations, in particular NUS Alba and NUS Cymru, in the development of the Irish Language.

Congress Mandates:

The LU Gaeilge to work with these external organisations, to share ideas, to bring the Celtic Language Conference to Ireland for the first time ever, and to ensure that Irish Language societies are central in all this work.

15 GA 3 Gaeltacht Fees

Congress notes

The publication of An Chomairle Mhúintoireachta's report of the Gaeltacht Placement Working Group, and the consistent focus on the importance of Gaeltacht placement to Student Teacher's experience.

Congress Further Notes

The reports recommendations as regard to the funding of this aspect of a student teachers training, and the Socio-economic barrier that has been created as a result of the decision to withdraw Government funding, and as a result students must incur upwards of €1,500 in fees to partake in Gaeltacht placements.

Congress Mandates

The Vice-President for AAQA and Leas-Uachtarán Gaeilge to lobby the department of Education and Skills to implement the recommendations of this report.

15 GA 4 Seachtain na Gaeilge

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, in the last week of February, as a special stand alone event prior to the National Seachtain 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 by 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 3 NEW IRISH LANGUAGE POLICY

Congress notes:

That there is a need to re-examine the current USI Irish Language Policy.

Congress mandates:

VP Irish Language to convene a panel to develop and, and present a reassessed Irish Language Policy at a National Council in the First Semester of 2014/2015.

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 6 OIFIGEACH NA GAEILGE AG GACH AONTAS/ IRISH LANGUAGE
OFFICER IN EVERY UNION

RE-ADOPTED CONGRESS 2016. EXPIRES CONGRESS 2019

Congress recognises:

The central importance played by Irish Language officers in those member organisations with an Irish Language Officer.

Congress notes:

The need for an Irish Language Officer in each member union to enhance the image of the language in the Union and ensure an Irish Language element to each aspect of the work done by the Student Union.

Congress mandates:

That the Vice President for Irish Language in USI will work towards ensuring the presence of an Irish Language Officer at the officer board of each member union.

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 cluinstitín 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

17 CZN 1 Environmental Sustainability

CONGRESS NOTES:

The importance of the goal of environmental sustainability - to conserve natural resources and to develop alternate sources of power while reducing pollution and harm to the environment.

CONGRESS NOTES:

The great work undertaken on divestment campaigns by student groups, notably Fossil Free TCD and Fossil Free QUB, who worked on environmental sustainability campaigns and succeeded in their efforts.

CONGRESS ALSO NOTES:

The Green campaigns run by WATERFORD INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' UNION, MSU and other MOs over the last couple of years.

CONGRESS THEREFORE MANDATES:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Campaigns to undertake a student focused environmental sustainability campaign to work towards promoting sustainability and energy conservation behaviour and knowledge.

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.

16 CZN 3 Climate Change

Proposed by the Presidents' Committee

Congress notes

Climate change presents a significant danger for the future.

Congress further notes

All people and organisations should seek to be aware of their individual impact on the environment and to adjust themselves accordingly where that impact is excessively wasteful.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to conduct a review of the events and work of USI to determine how we can reduce the impact on the environment. The review should include but not be limited to:

- Assessing the impact of events such as Pink Training, SUT and Congress
- The initiatives undertaken by institutions to address climate change
- Assessment of the impact of the how USI works.

Congress further mandates

The review to include recommendations as to how USI could better tackle issues around climate change on an on-going basis.

15 CZN 1 Lobby for 3rd Level Education Centre Polling Stations - Carried

Congress notes:

That access for students to vote is limited during term time.

Congress believes:

That providing on campus access to voting in all third level institutions would enable and empower students and all members of the educative community to have access to participating within the voting system by the governing authority.

Congress mandates:

All of Officer Board to lobby for the inclusion of third level institutions as polling stations in Ireland.

15 CZN 3 General election hustings

Congress notes

That there is the belief that students are not engaged in the political process.

Congress believes

That students are very often left out the political process around election time and thus are not incentivised to be engaged.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship and VP Campaigns, in consultation with MOs, to coordinate local hustings in advance of the General Election.

15 CZN 4 Automatic voter registration

Congress notes

The difficulties voter registration creates for the democratic process.

Congress applauds

The success USI has had with voter registration drives in the past.

Congress further notes

The success automatic voter registration has brought to many democracies by making voting more accessible.

Congress acknowledges

The option of an “opt-out scheme” in relation to organ donation in some countries, and believes that a similar set-up could be put in place for being registered on the Register of Electors.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP Equality and Citizenship to explore the possibility for the introduction of automatic voter registration for all elections and referenda, with the inclusion of an “opt-out” scheme, and to make proposals backing such to the appropriate Government department.

15 CZN 6 Election Information

Congress notes that as we head into the next academic year we are facing into a general election

Congress is concerned at the low level of political engagement among young people in Ireland with a National Youth Council of Ireland Survey of 1,020 young people finding:

Only 71.2% of young people aged 18-25 were registered to vote

Only 64% of young people between 18-21 years of age were registered to vote

Only 20% of young people have ever had personal communication with their local T.D./Councillor

Congress acknowledges the excellent work done by USI and MO's this year and welcomes the estimated figure of 20,000 students who are now registered thanks to the registration drive held in the early part of this academic year.

Congress believes that students are not fully informed of their rights when it comes to voting with not many knowing that students who study away from home are entitled to a postal vote.

Congress further believes that USI Policy 14 /CZN 2 did well as a comprehensive motion to create a voter registration campaign, however USI now needs to create an informational campaign on voting rights.

Congress therefore mandates that the USI Vice President for Campaigns and the USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship should create a comprehensive informational campaign template to be rolled out in MO's that explains the voting process, including Postal Voting, PR-STV, polling station ID requirements and other such relevant information.

Congress also mandates that the campaign should attempt to work on this campaign in conjunction with the National Youth Council of Ireland, the ISSU and any other organisation deemed appropriate by National Council.

15 CZN 7 General Election Campaign

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.

15 CZN 8 VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM REFORM

Congress Lauds:

The historic success of this year's voter registration efforts, on the part of both USI and individual MOs, in advance of the marriage equality and other referendums taking place in May.

Congress Notes:

The considerable logistical difficulties faced by USI, individual Students' Unions as well as other activist organisations, throughout both this year and previous years, in navigating the current Irish voter registration process as established by the Electoral Act 1992.

Congress Regrets:

A number of significant problems arising from the current system which specifically disadvantage those of temporary or changing abode (such as students), which include but are not limited to: the a wholly decentralised system with practice deviating widely between individual County Councils; a primary RFA form that registers households and not individuals; and a complete lack of clarity regarding the date of referendums.

Congress Notes:

The pre-election commitment from Fine Gael to convene an Electoral Commission to examine national practice on matters of election and referendum, which has yet to be fulfilled.

Congress Therefore Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship along with Officer Board to carry out a targeted lobbying campaign, focused on the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, seeking meaningful reform of this registration system.

Congress Further Mandates:

This campaign to be formulated and conducted by a Working Group, encompassing input of those with expertise on the relevant legislation and past experience of voter registration efforts, to be convened at the first National Council of the academic year 2015/16.

14 CZN 2 SERD

Congress welcomes:

The creation of the Student Elector Registration Database (SERD) as part of USI's 'Fight For Your Future Now' campaign, and the re-launch and re-brand as part of the Local & European Elections campaign.

Congress notes:

The large number of referendums which are forthcoming in Ireland including the Referendum on Marriage Equality, and the next General Election which is scheduled for 2016.

Congress believes:

SERD is very important both as a lobbying tool for USI campaigns, and also in order to promote voter registration and student engagement with the political system.

Congress also believes:

That the SERD database offers USI an extremely valuable platform to directly communicate with its members on elections, referendums, and USI's position on issues of student importance.

Congress further believes:

That the SERD campaign should be continued as a long-term priority for USI, in order to ensure USI have the maximum possible political clout and influence as a lobby group.

Congress mandates:

The President, Vice-President for Campaigns and Vice-President for Equality and Citizenship to organise an annual voter registration campaign utilising the SERD database, and to set an annual strategy and clear targets for student voter registration. This should be done in conjunction with the USI Taskforce on Volunteering and Citizenship.

Congress also mandates:

The Regional Vice-Presidents to assist MO's in running their on-campus voter registration drives, as well as implementing USI's strategy to meet voter registration targets on a regional basis.

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 1 NATIONAL CHARITY FUNDRAISING DAY**Congress notes:**

The importance of raising money for USI's national charity.

Congress further notes:

USI's ability to attract media attention, and organise mass student participation in groundlevel events.

Congress notes with concern:

The lack of publicity and fundraising currently given to USI's national charity.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Campaigns, the Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region and the Vice President for the Southern Region to explore the feasibility of a National Fundraising Day for the next 3 years, with the aim of involving all Member Organisations in dedicated fundraising activities once a year.

12 CZN 2 STUDENTS IN THE WORKPLACE

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.

12 CZN 3 USI STUDENT PARTICIPATION AWARDS

Congress recognises:

A lot of unrecognised valuable work is completed by MOs of USI each year across a wide range of areas and that many students work tirelessly for the betterment of Students' Union and Clubs and Societies.

Congress acknowledges:

That the range of work completed is diverse and covers a vast area of extracurricular activities and that there is little recognition for these students in a formal capacity.

Congress notes:

The success of the BICS Awards and NUS Awards in the UK.

Congress believes:

That the students who work hard in these extracurricular activities should be recognised and acknowledged.

Congress therefore mandates Officerboard:

To organise USI Student Participation Awards whereby students will be accredited for their involvement in local Students' Unions, USI Campaigns and involvement in Clubs and Societies.

The President and Officer Board to bring forward to the first National Council of 2012/2013 a cohesive plan for the Student Participation Awards which should include the categories that will be included in the Award Ceremony, who will be eligible, how they will be run and judged, deadlines and any other preparation needed.

12CZN 4 VOTING RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD

Congress recognises:

That high unemployment has meant many of our friends, relatives and neighbours have been forced to leave Ireland in search of work elsewhere, and that as in generations past, we are exporting many of our best and brightest individuals, and that many of these will settle in their new homes and spend the rest of their lives there. This legacy of forced emigration has had an extremely detrimental effect on the life of our nation and our State, and that indeed; Ireland is the only country in the world which has a lower population now than in 1845.

Congress further recognises:

That over the past twenty years, the various holders of the office of President of Ireland have reached out to the Irish abroad, and that Article 2 of the Constitution states how "the Irish nation cherishes its special affinity with people of Irish ancestry living abroad who share its cultural identity and heritage". Despite this, Ireland is one of the very few countries in the world which still denies voting rights to those citizens who are not resident in the State.

Congress notes:

That there are over a million Irish citizens currently living outside the State, including many in Northern Ireland, alongside another two to three million people who have a claim on Irish citizenship. Congress also notes that as a community, these people are no less Irish and care no less about Ireland because they have emigrated, and that accordingly, they should not be unreasonably excluded from the life of the nation and the State.

Congress mandates the USI:

To adopt a policy which calls on the government to extend the right to vote in elections for the President of Ireland to all Irish citizens living outside the State. The exact mechanism to be used in such elections should be determined by the government, as long as it encourages as wide a participation among the Irish abroad in these elections as is reasonably possible, but with particular regard to the opportunities which technology offers in reaching these people.

To include this policy in future Lobby of the Oireachtas documents and to approach all the registered political parties seeking support on this policy.

Congress mandates the USI President:

To write to each of the elected officers of each member organisation in September 2012 asking them to present this policy for approval at their decision-making body of students, such as a class representatives council.