

MICHELLE BYRNE

#ByrneBright



VICE PRESIDENT FOR
CAMPAIGNS

SOURCE: [unreadable]

My name is Michelle Byrne and I am the current VP for Campaigns. I am running for re-election to be your USI VP for Campaigns.

*This is a draft manifesto ahead of Congress as I am still speaking with officers and students to hear what they want to see moving forward.

Follow my campaign on Facebook:

Michelle Byrne for USI Vice President for Campaigns | www.facebook.com/ByrneBright

This manifesto is **action based** from learnings from this year, listening to members and new ideas I've had along the way. They are tangible, realistic and forward facing and written in accessible language for the majority of people.

Higher Education Funding | Maoiniú Ardoideachas

- Roll out a year long sustained campaign.
- Timetabled campaign objectives throughout the year.
- Information campaign to our students based on what has come before.
- Integrate the campaign into as every piece of work we carry out as much as possible.
- Issue our own cost of living research, which is unbiased and breaks it down regionally.
- Online campaign group for students to be fully up to date with what is happening.
- Review current legislation and identify areas that we can improve and target.
- Engage with international organisations and look at international practices.
- Highlight student groups who are affected by additional costs such as those on placement, international students and postgrads.
- Directly target the education spokesperson and politicians running for elections to ensure higher education funding is in their manifestos.
- Continue our work on lobbying county councillors and have motions tabled at city & county council meetings.
- Include key messages that affect our members in the North.
- Train students and officers in Non-Violent Direct Action in order to bring the campaign implementation to a new level.

Student Accommodation | Lóistín na Mac Léinn

- The USI 3 year strategy is falling this year at Congress. I want to engage stakeholders such as campaigns subcommittee, officers, student activists, researchers and more in forming a new strategy which looks at core aims in relation to campaigning, legislation and more.
- Review current legislation and identify areas that we can improve and target.
- Online campaign group for students to be fully up to date with what is happening.
- Utilise the Raise the Roof, National Homeless & Housing Coalition and the Coalition to End Youth Homelessness to support core student accommodation asks.

- Meet with Housing spokespeople from political parties to get core asks on their policy books ahead of European, local and potential elections.
- Create a lobby campaign based off the results of the 'Homes For Study' survey results.
- Do an outreach campaign in student accommodation complexes, supported by an online campaign, to encourage and support students to bring cases to the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) to challenge rent increases over 4%.

USI Campaigns Subcommittee | Grúpa Oibre um Feachtais

- Motion to Congress on an addition to constitution as a Campaigns Strategy committee - clearly embedding it in our work and giving it a clear mandate.
- National Council to vote on year long campaigns the subcommittee will strategise on at the beginning of the year.
- Fixed agenda item at USI National Council for updates from Campaigns subcommittee on their work every six weeks.
- Set dates for meetings, agreed at the start of the year to ensure full participation from committee members is guaranteed.
- Create a terms of reference based on research from this year's committee and members that came before it.
- More ownership for committee members - break up campaigns tasks and give members action points.
- Invite the NUS-USI Campaigns officer to meetings.
- Work with the NUS-USI President, NUS-USI Campaigns officer and relevant liberation officers to have campaigns subcommittee meetings that specific on showing solidarity for campaigns in the North.
- Review the election process and membership for the committee.
- Invite suitable staff/externals that support the campaigns in the discussions.

USI Campaigns | Feachtais AMLÉ

- Move towards more sustainable campaign materials.
(including elections - I have not printed manifestos for two years!)
- Make materials available to students' unions ahead of national campaign weeks.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the HSE on HSE funded, USI run campaigns to ensure the relationship is clear and the student messaging is core.
- Supporting USI run events with complimentary online information campaigns for greater reach - for example; Mature Students' Seminar supported by information campaign for those who are not in the room to reach more people.
- Online Facebook groups for creating campaign networks.
- Define the relationship between policy officers, regionals, staff and PR for a smoother running of our activities.
- Work with regional officers to ensure roll out of all USI campaigns across campuses.
- Engage with student activists and grassroots campaigns in the running of their campaigns and to actively seek out opportunities to engage with established student activist groups.
- Continue to work with the All Ireland Student Activist Network as started this year.

- Ensure campaigns led by NUS-USI are promoted and encourage support and solidarity from all members.

Accessibility and Communication | Cumarsáid & Rochtana

- Embed more video content in our campaigns and include subtitles.
- Weekly video round-up and/or podcast for students for social media and supported by a round up email for officers.
- Work with Students' Unions to gain access to students' emails on campuses, compliant with GDPR guidelines.
- Relaunch the monthly email newsletter and achieve them on the website.
- Investment in the website - create a backend hub for SU officers to have resources when they log in. This will also assist with institutional memory.
- Create USI document branding guidelines
- Have National Council and working group agendas, documentation and minutes online.
- USI Awareness campaign - connecting with our current members from the start of the academic year.
- Create a calendar of events and promotion with the USI President for the 60th anniversary of USI this year.

Union Development | Forbairt na nAontas

- Union Development (UD) working group - to prioritise the focus of UD work for the year.
- Special focus on Technological University mergers and the supports SUs need in that process.
- Institutional memory to be built up within the organisation for the benefit of SU officers.
- Partnerships - grow and promote partnerships and ensure we have clear memorandum of understanding with them.
- Activist groups - link in directly with events activists groups are running such as the activist training delivered by the All Ireland Student Activist Network.
- More value for membership - free access to a doctor with VideoDoc partnership, seek reduced rates for car and travel insurance and trade union memberships.
- Trade unions - Update the SIPTU-USI partnership as needed and promote it to members allowing for free access to the Workers' Rights Centre and more.
- Build allegiances with trade unions, similar to the SIPTU-USI agreement, in as many sectoral trade unions as possible with the aim to gain benefits for students. Particular focus on free/reduced cost membership to access to the services of those trade unions that match the area of study or part-time work while studying.
- Advocate for elected Students' Union officers and their staff to become members of a trade union.
- USI Awareness campaign for non-members. Create a membership strategy, a 'How to Join USI' pack and an Further Education support resource for those setting up and/or developing a students' union.

Training | Traenáil

- Reviewing training for officers based on feedback from current officers.
- Conduct a training needs review of incoming officers ahead of them starting the role.
- Training for Students' Union officers to be facilitated in bigger blocks as was done this year with Top Up training alongside SUT+
- Create a Class Rep training 'how to' with the VP Academic Affairs.
- Examine the possibility of including training for officers on data protection, the work of European Students' Union (ESU), environmental, professionalism, history of USI, non-violent Direct Action and governance & representation on boards.
- Create a Students' Union officers handbook as a learning support tool.
- Make more trainings available for students.
- Building on the success of the changes made this year, I want to again make sure local election trainings are provided on campuses with regional officers. Create online resources for those who cannot attend trainings offered.
- I want to continue the success of WomenLead and support the VP for Equality & Citizenship to look at how we can encourage more people from diverse backgrounds to run.
- Encourage people to engage with USI elections with a 'USI Run For Election' campaign and ensure the wide promotion of the candidates running.

Brexit & the North | Breatimeacht & an Tuaisceart

- Information campaign on what is happening, in student friendly language.
- Ensuring that students are considered on every level throughout that period with a targeted lobbying campaign.
- Include NUS-USI in lobby efforts in the South.
- Support NUS-USI and SUs in the North in their campaigns.
- Support the work of NUS-USI after their restructuring where possible & appropriate.

Irish Campaigns | Feachtais na nGael

- With the success of our first year with a full-time Irish officer, I want to ensure this role is utilised in all of our campaigns.
- Build on the work done this year with our members in the North through campaigns and events with the VP for the Irish language/LU don Ghaelige.
- I also want to ensure a cohesive roll out of the use of the Irish Language in all campaigns and ensure that the inclusion of the language is not tokenistic.

Postgrad Students | Mic Léinn Iarchéime

- With the success of our first year with a part-time officer, I want to ensure this role is utilised in all of our campaigns.
- I want to make sure that campaigns are inclusive to Postgrad students - whilst we don't need to reinvent the wheel, we do need to include Postgrads as a spoke. All campaigns must be 'postgrad proofed'.

- To create a campaign coming out of the results of the postgrad survey being run this year.
- Developing links with other unions to further postgrad representation should also be a priority. We need to look at working with SIPTU, TUI and IFUT to work towards a mutual working partnership for postgrads.

Experience & Achievements | Taithí & Bua

- Previously WIT Students' Union Education officer, WITSU President, USI VP for the Southern Region and current VP for Campaigns.
- Degree in Design (Visual Communications) and I have a diploma in Digital Marketing.
- Nominated for Best Education Campaign for 'Upskill Week' at the Student Achievement Awards, a campaign that has since become a staple on many campuses.
- Previously on the Governing Body of WIT, director of campus services and WIT trustee.
- USI Campaigns subcommittee for 3 terms previously.
- Past member of USI Finance committee.
- Coordinator of the USI Entertainments Committee and policy for two years.
- Previously USI International Policy Support officer and represented students internationally at European Students' Union events.
- Previously selected for ESU 'Women's participation in the movement' taskforce member
- Elected to board of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) which I currently sit on.
- Board member of Problem Gambling Ireland.
- Addressed over 12,000 people at National Housing Protest this year and was lead organiser on Oct 3rd housing protest.
- Addressed Leinster House Housing Committee twice legislation on student accommodation.
- Mobilised Pharmacy Students for protest on fees & payment ban & got the pay ban lifted
- Spoke at Students for Sensible Drug Policy (SSDP) conference.
- Worked with HSE to create Drug Harm Reduction campaigns, sexual health campaigns and mental health campaign.
- Ensure students voices & needs were heard in the INMO nurses and midwifery strikes.
- Coordinated a successful #GaelFees campaign and protest with VP for Irish Language.
- Worked with SIPTU on students' workers rights & Early Childcare Educators' campaign.
- Attended the Climate Case, climate justice lobby day & various climate action protests.
- On organising committee of the National 'Still Waiting' Health campaign.
- Organiser for the upcoming International Women's Day walkouts.
- Participated in Direct Provision think-in.
- Worked with All Ireland Student Activist Network.
- Supported the Palestinian Students' Union in their work towards developing an SU.
- Involved in organising of largest lobby day to date with 130 TDs and Senators.
- Part of the USI team that lobbied to secure €1 million in the SAF for students.
- Supported students in working towards their Gold Gaisce awards.
- Led research on pay and tipping conditions for students working in hospitality and supported the legislation recently passed in the Seanad.

- Lobbied to have students included in the the Ban Evictions bill which has now progressed to second stage in the Dail.
- Spoke at direct action event on domestic violence and housing with Take Back The City.
- On one of Ireland's leading podcasts 'Reboot republic' speaking about student accommodation.
- Spoke at political festivals including the Marxism festival & Emerging Politics festival.
- Ran multiple successful affiliation referendums.
- Last year, I was hugely involved in Repeal campaigning across campuses in the Repeal Mobile, across southern campuses, in my home town in Wicklow and where lived in Waterford.
- Spoke at Solidarity rally for Choice in the North.
- Supported Prides north and south of the border.
- Attended the first ever Trans pride in the North and the first one in the South.
- I #Stand4Women during the cervical cancer scandal.
- Coordinated a spoken word piece for World Mental Health Day.
- Joined an occupation of a council building in Waterford to highlight the housing crisis.
- Coordinated large scale murals across campuses in a campaign against sexual violence as part of SHAG week.
- Delivered sessions on campaigning in Denmark to student activists.
- And much more!

For further questions, contact me on;

- michellebyrnedesign@yahoo.com
- 0861303100
- <https://www.facebook.com/ByrneBright/>