

Congress Comhdháil AMLÉ



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

2019

Castlebar, Co. Mayo

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President's Letter

President's Welcome to the 60th Annual Congress of the Union of Students in Ireland

Síona Cahill

A Chairde,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Congress 2019, representing 374,000 students from over 30 colleges across the Island of Ireland.

Over the next 4 days, you will decide and shape the future direction of USI by debating and voting on motions and policy, and by electing the next leaders of the student movement. Throw yourself into these discussions, don't be afraid to disagree with the opinion of others but do so - not for the sake of it, but because you have an opinion formed by experience, evidence, or relevant research. USI must be built on high quality discussion, to ensure high quality policy.

We have so many challenges ahead of us as a movement. There has been no decision made on a sustainable funding model for higher education in Ireland. There is a gap of 17,000 beds for student heads expected by 2024. Academic standards and supporting a quality teaching and learning environment are not the priority of our institutions. SUSI has not increased since 2012, while the cost of living continues to spiral. Unpaid work-placements riddle the system. Postgrads are increasingly taking on more work and yet they, and many academics are facing a future of uncertain, precarious contracts. Consent education is not yet a reality. Mental health supports continue to be sidelined on campuses, and in our wider culture.

Over the next 4 days, you will decide how we will tackle these, and many other issues. This is up to you. Each delegate here is representing 1,000 students. That in itself is an honour and a responsibility.

The Irish student movement has been a leading political force for societal change. We don't just reflect internally, we recognise the role we have: we demand a better future for everyone.

In 2015, we led the campaign to #MakeGráTheLaw, in 2018 we #MadeMnáTheLaw, and we must build on those wins - while remembering that those from Northern Ireland still have access to neither. We have a strong collective voice and we should continue to use it, and not get complacent about the importance of our campaigning, our support, our solidarity and our action on the issues affecting all of us, and the kind of society we want to work and live in.

As we approach our 60th Birthday, it is up to you to decide where we go next - we need to keep getting sh*t done, together.

Is mise le meas,

Síona

@AnTaobhRua



Congressional Greetings from the Congress Director



Ben Archibald

Dear Congressperson,

Congress is the beating, living heart of the Student Movement in Ireland, and for the past six years I have been privileged to be appointed to organise it. Welcome, then, to the Breaffy House Resort in Castlebar, Co. Mayo – Congress has never been held here, and we're excited to see what Castlebar has to offer.

In addition to my assignments for the democratic running of USI Congress, I have responsibility for the general safety of the event, liaison with the catering and housekeeping staff of the hotel and the relationship with our suppliers and partners in the event. I am your liaison with the hotel – if you experience any problems, speak to your delegation leader who may well then refer you on to me.

Every delegate and observer at Congress matters to us, which is why we have a robust (and robustly enforced) set of regulations for both the Congress room and outside in the hotel. It's a daunting prospect for many first-time delegates to be together with a few hundred other student activists, and it's important that we make the important work of actually participating in the debates at Congress as easy as possible for them. The Code of Conduct helps us do that.

Every delegate is responsible for their own safety at this event, but we're all collectively responsible to create a space for people to find their voice on behalf of the students who sent them here. Rest assured that if you take your safety and comfort seriously, we will too.

Leave arguments on the Congress floor and use the evenings and dinners to find out more about the students who, just like you, have come to do good things at USI Congress.

And another thing – have fun. We have laid on great music, great entertainment and great food to keep your interest this week. We've listened to delegates from the past to bring great ideas into play this Congress.

I'll have the honour of addressing you on Monday afternoon, when we'll agree our code of conduct and undertake training to make sure you can fully participate at the event. Do try to stay awake. There'll be a quiz at the end.

I wish you every success this Congress – be safe, be well and be vocal.

Ben Archibald,

USI Congress Director

Chair of Steering Committee

Colm Murphy

Delegates,

On behalf of Steering Committee I would like to welcome you to USI Annual Congress 2019. Our role at Congress is to chair sessions and make sure that the rules get applied objectively so that whether your motion passes or fails, you'll know that at least the process was fair and impartial.

Congress is great fun, and a great opportunity to try out your public speaking skills. You are each here to represent your fellow students, your own Union and your college. Have respect for each speaker, even if you fervently disagree with every word and they are a minority of one. One day you could be in that minority of one and you would appreciate the same respect.

Other than chairing sessions one of our most important jobs is Steering Awards! Categories change every year but best speaker, best maiden speaker, angry young speaker, best delegation (small, medium & large) are some of the awards you can expect. So if put on a good show, make sure a member of Steering Committee knows your name and college!

Colm Murphy

Chairman



Chair of Elections Subcommittee

Richard Hammond

Elections Sub-Committee is comprised of Nora Duncan, Scott Ahearn, Cathy Pembroke and me.

Our function is to ensure that you can have confidence that both the polling and the counting of ballots are conducted in an independent, impartial and accurate manner.

To that end, Delegate Leaders have been advised on a number of occasions to ensure that each delegate has their Student Card upon their person during polling. Each delegate's identity is verified upon registration and during polling there will be random spot checks on Student Cards to verify identification and student status.

Following the close of polling, Elections Sub-Committee with the assistance of USI HQ will ensure that the ballot box is securely stored until the counting of the ballots. At the election count a representative from each candidate (or the candidate themselves) may be present but subject strictly to their covenant not to release any results prematurely. Your cooperation in these respects will ensure an efficient election process. We hope that you have a productive and enjoyable Annual Congress.

Richard Hammond,
Chairperson



Introducing Steering Committee

Steering Committee is a group of facilitators who chair and advise USI Congress on the conduct of debate.

Chairperson **Colm Murphy**

Colm is a former Deputy President for Education in WIT Students' Union and went on to serve in USI as Education Officer, and then as Deputy President and Campaigns Officer. Colm has worked in a variety of career development roles including graduate recruitment, student development and professional education. Colm is also a qualified pilot and chairperson of a flying club

Deputy Chairperson **Aodhán Ó Dea**

Bhí Aodhán mar Uachtarán agus Oifigeach Gaeilge don Aontas i gColáiste na hOllscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath. Chuir sé spéis san Aontas ar dtús chun an Gaeilge a chur chun cinn agus dimigh sé ar aghaidh le bheith mar Oifigeach Gaeilge le AMLÉ ar feadh dhá bhliain idir 2009-2011. Tá sé ag obair le Conradh na Gaeilge ó shin mar Stiúrthóir Forbartha. Is breá leis ag labhairt le daoine éagsúla as Gaeilge nó as Béarla- abair "haigh" leis má tá deis agat

Firic spraoiúil- Nuair a bhí Aodhán mar pháiste bhuaigh sé dearbhán €2,000 Arnotts. Chuaigh sé ag siopadóireacht ann leis an clann le ceiliúradh a dhéanamh, ach ghreamaigh a iallacha sa staighre beo agus ghortaigh sé a chos. Tá scanradh an domhain air roimh staighrí beo ó shin (ach nach iontach an Ghaeilge ar escalator)

Aodhán was President and Irish Language Officer of UCD Students' Union. He originally got involved in the Union to help promote the Irish language and he eventually went on to be Irish Language Officer for USI for two years between 2009 -2011.

He has been working with Conradh na Gaeilge since then as Director of Development. He loves a good chat in Irish or English, say "hi" if you get a chance.

Fun Fact- When Aodhán was a child he won a €2,000 voucher for Arnotts, after going there to celebrate with a shopping spree his laces got caught in the escalator causing a foot injury and he has had an irrational fear of escalators ever since

Chairperson of Elections Subcommittee **Richard Hammond**

Richard Hammond was formerly President of the U.C.C. Societies' Guild, Southern Area Officer of USI, and President of USI. He is currently a solicitor in practice at Mallow, County Cork with Hammond Good Solicitors. Richard is member of the Associate Faculty at the Law School of the Law Society of Ireland and is a Council Member of both the Southern Law Association and the Law Society of Ireland. He is also qualified as an Arbitrator, a Trust & Estate Practitioner, a Mediator, and a European Trademark & Design Attorney. He is married to Joyce with whom he has three children.

Joe O'Connor

Joe currently works as a Lead Organiser with Ireland's largest public service trade union, Fórsa, where he has responsibility for national campaigns. Previously, Joe spent 4 great years in the student movement. This included 3 years in GMIT Students' Union, with 1 year as Vice-President and Welfare Officer and 2 years as President, and 1 year as USI President in 2013-14. Since leaving USI, Joe has served as chairperson of the Social Democrats, board director with SpunOut.ie, and midlands-west co-ordinator for the Campaign to Re-elect Michael D. Higgins. He was also a member of the infamous 'Cassells' expert group on the future funding of higher education, and was actively involved in both the 2015 'Yes Equality' and 2018 'Together for Yes' referendum campaigns.

Joe hails from Roscommon but currently lives in Greystones, Co. Wicklow, with his better half Aisling and Ned the cocker spaniel. Joe is a keen golfer, his favourite sports teams are Chelsea FC and the Buffalo Bills, and his favourite band is The National.

Ciara Guinan

Ciara Guinan is Computer Systems Management graduate and a former Deputy President for Welfare and Education in I.T Carlow Students' Union where she served for 2 years. Following on from that Ciara was Vice President for the Southern Area for USI for 1 year.

In her spare time Ciara enjoys attending concerts and spending time with friends and family.

Nuala McAdams

Nuala is a former Education officer of QUBSU, serving 2 terms from 2011-2013. Following this she worked for QUB for a number of years before moving into accountancy. Nuala is now an exam qualified Chartered Accountant and the current Chair of the Chartered Accountants Student Society of Ireland.

Fun facts: a picture of me sitting on a cannon on the Derry Walls was used on billboards across Ireland as part of a tourist campaign.

Adrian Kelly

Adrian was vice president for the Coleraine campus of the University of Ulster Students Union for one year before then serving two years as Overall President. During this time Adrian was actively involved with USI and served as a member of the Finance Committee and a number of working groups.

After leaving the Students Union Adrian undertook a masters in Management and Corporate Governance and is now a senior Corporate Governance Consultant within a financial institution. In addition Adrian is a Council member of his regional branch of the Governance Institute

Nora Duncan

A Ulster University BA Hons Drama Graduate from County Antrim. Student Union Involvement began as

a part time Equality officer UUM in her final year. Nora served 1 term as VP Education & Welfare followed by 1 term as President of UUSU, she has also worked for two terms in Waterford Institute of Technology Students' Union.

Nora's career developed within the Public Health Agency as a Youth Health Co-ordinator specialising in the areas of drugs and alcohol awareness, sexual health education, inclusion and diversity, UK Parliament outreach and engagement.

As well as this being Nora's 3rd year as a member of USI Steering she is also currently the Senior Campaigns & Development Advisor for NUS-USI, enjoying her return to the Student Movement and supporting our 200,000+ members.

Conor Doyle

Conor went close to overtaking "Van Wilder" record with attending third level education. Having completed his honours degree in Legal Studies he was elected twice as Welfare Officer at Waterford Institute before taking the role of President at the union for an additional two terms. A keen Gaelic Footballer, and represented his home County of Wicklow at all grades.

Fun Fact - Received a phone call from TV3 a number of years ago to say he had been accepted onto the "Take Me Out" show. Later revealed he had been stitched up by his friends.

Eoin Hayes

Limerick man Eoin Hayes served as President of UCCSU 2009/10, where he started constitutional reform initiatives in UCCSU and USI. Since, he's worked for Google, the Obama 2012 campaign, a management consultancy in NYC, and a Silicon Valley company, Palantir Technologies. He spends his free time at CrossFit, volunteering with local kids in Ringsend, and on charitable and political causes. He recently moved from New York back to Dublin, where he works as a freelance management consultant. He holds a BEng in Process & Chemical Engineering from UCC and an MSc in Management from London Business School and will try very hard not to get into trouble at this year's Congress.

USI Congress is the supreme decision making body of the Union of Students in Ireland. It has the power to review and amend the Constitution, to decide policy and to elect the members of the Officerboard.

Who attends congress?

Congress is composed of the current Officerboard and delegates from each Member Organisation (MO) whose affiliation fees have been paid. The number of delegates from each MO varies according to the number of students registered in that Students' Union.

Who is in charge at congress?

Steering Committee is responsible for ensuring that things run smoothly and that motions are discussed fairly and properly.

They do not vote and they are not members of any delegation. Steering Committee enforce the rules which Congress have adopted : they do not make the rules.

Their responsibility at Congress is to preside over the various sessions of debate and to ensure that speakers are not improperly interrupted. They also enforce time limits or other regulations and ensure that votes are carried out in a proper manner.

How do debates work and who proposes the motions?

The Officer or MO who put the motion forward initially, normally proposes the motions in each session.

If the people who initially wrote the motion don't turn up, or don't want to speak, any delegate can start the debate by proposing the motion. Once a motion is proposed, it is then open to the floor for discussion.

How often can I speak?

Unless you are the person who proposed the motion, you can only speak once on any motion. You can, however, speak on as many motions as you wish during Congress. If you proposed a motion, or if you have an amendment to a motion successfully passed, then you can also sum up before a vote is taken.

How long can I speak for?

Speakers for and against a motion alternate, until a vote is called. Note that you must speak for or against the motion.

Once a vote is called for, the Proposer has the right to sum up, unless an amendment to the motion has been passed, in which case, the proposer of the amendment has the right to summate.

What procedural motions can be put?

To help ensure that debates run smoothly and as quickly as possible, procedural motions exist. The following are the procedural motions and their effect, if passed:

(A) THAT THE QUESTION NOW BE PUT

If passed, the Proposer will summarise and then an immediate vote will be taken.

(B) THAT THE QUESTION NOT BE PUT

If passed, no vote will be taken on the matter under discussion.

(C) THAT THE QUESTION BE TAKEN IN PARTS

If passed, divides the motion or amendment into specified sections to be voted on individually. Used if there are sections that you do not agree with. This must be put in writing and handed into Steering Committee.

(D) THAT THE MATTER BE REFERRED BACK

If passed, refers the matter back to a specified time or a specified Officer, or a specified Committee, or to a National Council. It is therefore not voted upon at Congress.

(E) A CHALLENGE TO THE CHAIRPERSON'S RULING

If passed, the Chairperson must change his or her ruling on an issue in accordance with the motion.

(F) NO CONFIDENCE IN THE CHAIRPERSON

If passed, the Chairperson will vacate the Chair for the remainder of the session and will be replaced by another member of Steering Committee.

(G) (EXPERIMENTAL) ADDITIONAL ROUND OF SPEECHES

If passed by a simple indicative vote, two additional rounds of speeches will be heard. This is an experimental procedure to be used in sessions in which Steering applies the experimental Balanced Debate Procedure.

The procedure for raising a Procedural Motion will be detailed at Congress Training.

Who do I go to if I have any questions?

If you have questions about debate or the policy process, go to Steering Committee, who should be able to help answer any query you may have.

Questions about the hotel and organisation of the event should be made to the Congress Director.

Congress code of conduct

USI wants all participants at events to have an enjoyable, productive and safe time. USI has developed procedures to ensure that everything possible is done to protect our members. More guidance has been given to Delegation Leaders, who also have some responsibility for keeping delegates safe and well informed. At the commencement of Congress, anybody remaining at the event will have been deemed to have accepted this Code of Conduct and to be bound by it for the duration of Congress.

Key people for safety

SU Delegation Leader

Your SU has a delegation leader - this is usually the Students' Union President, but it may be someone else on the delegation. This person is responsible for supporting and leading the delegation of representatives from your SU, and for most circumstances may be your most useful contact.

USI Safety Champion

In your pack and on your ID lanyard you will have the telephone number for the Safety Champion, which you can ring at any time of the day or night to report anything you think could be dangerous. This number is to be used in emergencies only.

Congress Director

The Congress Director is appointed by the National Council to manage Congress.

Principles

Responsibility to others

The ethos of our union means that we each have a responsibility to take care of ourselves and to respect the space, integrity and needs of others. Every delegate, facilitator, trainer, committee member and member of staff of USI and its partners is entitled to a safe and trouble-free event. Everybody at a USI event has a responsibility not to cause difficulties for or endanger someone else at our events. We will not accept or tolerate any action which causes another person at a USI event to either be in danger or to believe that they are in danger.

Respect for others

USI believes in the right to freedom of expression for our delegates. Debate about competing ideas is healthy and the basis of our policy process. We don't shout down others when they're speaking. We don't use personally insulting, threatening or offensive language and we don't stop others from expressing themselves

within our rules.

Responsibility to promote safety

Every delegate at a USI event has a responsibility to promote safety. Delegates must report anything they feel could endanger themselves or another delegate. Every delegate has a right to have their concerns listened to and respected.

Protocols

Abusive or violent behaviour

USI will not tolerate abusive or violent behaviour at any USI event. Anybody engaged in abusive or violent behaviour at a USI event can expect to be sent home. Any person engaged in activity which endangers another person at a USI event can expect to be excluded from the event (or any part of it) and not allowed to participate in future USI events.

Conduct

USI events are focused on the work of the student movement over all. Every event we hold is geared toward supporting students and their representatives to best serve the needs of students - so the behaviour of people at our events is paramount.

Alcohol and drugs can impair a user's judgment and lead to risky behaviour, including sexually risky behaviour. It's not acceptable to have illegal drugs at a USI event. Anti-social behaviour, particularly that caused by the influence of drugs or alcohol is also not acceptable - and not compatible with remaining at a USI event. The USI Alcohol Policy contains more information on this.

Sexual conduct

USI has a zero tolerance approach to sexual misconduct or harassment. Personal space, privacy and the right to control over one's own body are vital to USI.

USI will not accept:

Unwanted sexual comments, including about someone's body or private life

Repeated unwanted sexual invitations or requests

Unwanted touching or sexually motivated activity

Consent

At all USI events, we apply a standard of 'explicit consent'. If you want to engage in sexual activity, you need to be certain the other person wants it too. Get a yes, or GTFO.

Investigation

All allegations of misconduct at USI events will be treated seriously- but USI is not capable of conducting investigations into specific allegations and will not undertake to do so. We will provide support and information about other agencies which may be able to help. Where an allegation relates to something which endangers our members, USI will always support the relevant authorities in whatever way it can. If USI Staff become aware of something which endangers our members, you can expect the staff member to report it to the relevant authorities.

Accommodation and sleep

USI provides accommodation at many events. Often this is to be shared between multiple delegates. Everyone at our events has a right to peace and a good night's sleep in the room and the bed they've been allocated, with no exceptions-we need this right to be respected by everyone all the time.

The people who have been allocated a room have responsibility for the room and are responsible for loss or damages there. By agreeing to stay at Congress you agree to be bound by this.

USI Staff

USI staff have no right to participate in the democratic bodies of USI, and no right to reply to public comments about their work. It follows, therefore, that USI staff should not be mentioned or discussed during debates at a democratic event. Concerns about staff should be brought to the President.

Staff can be approached about anything you like - but if it relates to the policies or the procedures of the organisation, you can expect them to say nothing. Staff have no role nor any 'official' view on policy or politics.

Any violent or abusive conduct towards staff will be treated seriously and if unresolved could lead to the withdrawal of USI staff from the event. You can expect such conduct to be reported to the relevant authorities in every case.

The same applies to staff USI has hired temporarily or employees of organisations with which USI works and hotel staff.

Authority to eject

The authority to require a person at a USI event to leave the event (temporarily or permanently) lies with the SU delegation leader, President, and the Congress Director. The lead officer or Congress Director can take whatever advice and make whatever consultations they feel are

appropriate - their decision is final for the event and no refunds may be made in respect of fees paid for attendance for an ejected person.

Why would we eject?

A decision to eject a person will be taken if we feel that the safety or security of people at the event, or the perception of safety or security would be reduced by the person's continuing presence at the event.

We might also eject a person if otherwise the order of a democratic or training event would be impeded, where they have engaged in misconduct or have threatened to do so.

Candidates' statements

Candidates for President

Lorna Fitzpatrick

A Chairde,

I hope you are enjoying Congress 2019 and feel fully equipped and excited to shape the future of our movement for the next three years.

My name is Lorna Fitzpatrick and I am asking for your support to become the President of the Union of Students in Ireland. I have been involved in the student movement since I started college in 2011, I have been a Class Representative, a Part-Time Officer, an Education & Welfare Officer, a two-term President, and I am currently the Vice President for the Southern Region.

I have a vision for our movement, it is ambitious but achievable. I want to see a strong and connected movement that listens, learns and acts based on your input. This year, we can make a positive and lasting change - on fees, accommodation, climate change and direct provision - but imagine how vast that change could be if we work together to achieve it.

As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

I look forward to talking to you all in person over the next few days.

Le meas,

Lorna



Oisín Hassan

A chairde,

My name is Oisín Hassan. I'm the current VP Academic Affairs and USI Deputy President. I was previously QUBSU VP Equality & Diversity, elected on a platform of student liberation, LGBTQ+ rights, and postgraduate engagement. I was then elected QUBSU VP Education and ever since have worked on improving representation, building student partnership, and improving teaching, learning, and student support.

I want to guide a USI that is ambitious. A USI that stands its ground on Higher Education funding. A USI that is radical on the student accommodation crisis. A USI that is capable of activating and mobilising our diverse membership. To do that we need a strategic vision, to reconsider who we are and how we achieve change. We must continue to build a national Union that can adapt more quickly and reflect the needs of our members more effectively.

I believe I have the experience to transform USI to meet those aims. As a student movement we shouldn't underestimate our ability to make incredible things happen. I hope that you will put your trust in me as the next President of the Union of Students in Ireland so that we can achieve even more for all students.



Candidates for Vice President for Academic Affairs

Kevin McStravock

Hello Congress, I'm Kevin McStravock and I'm the current President of Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU). I've had an amazing three years representing the students of Ulster University and I don't feel ready to walk away from the student movement just yet so that's why I'm running to be your next VP Academic Affairs.

During my tenure, I've worked with an incredible team and achieved several collective wins – from establishing a Staff-Student Partnership Agreement through to securing more investment than ever before in our Students' Union spaces. I'm determined to use my experience to support your representatives in improving the local and national student experience.

If elected I want to take a ground up approach to Higher Education funding, champion student involvement in all aspects of governance and amplify the voice of a diversity of learners including postgraduates, mature students and student teachers and nurses. I'll also continue to keep my ear to the ground on the bread and butter issues affecting you.

There has never been a more important time to elect a strong national Union – I've previously represented 200,000 students as a part-time officer in NUS-USI so for an experienced, passionate and committed voice, please vote Kev In!

Marie Sheedy

Hi humans

My name is Marie Sheedy and at Congress 2019 I want to be elected your new VP for Academic Affairs for the Union of Students in Ireland.

I am adaptable, relatable, empathetic, resilient and frank by nature, but why does that matter?

My personality will allow me to be a highly versatile officer when it comes to achieving the goals of USI. I believe in practical and implementable solutions to issues, and my manifesto has been created based on the wants and needs of students. I have ideas around improving engagement, increasing student representation, and strengthening the power of the student voice at a representative body level. Along with this, I plan on developing new and improved training modules for officers to better equip them in their roles.

I have experience as a two term Education Officer and single term President where I navigated many challenging interactions as a Students' Union Officer.

I'm exceptionally driven and focussed, but most importantly I want to create conditions for success for all officers handling education or academic affairs positions, and I will do so with pride if you grant me the opportunity.



Candidates for Vice President for Campaigns

Michelle Byrne

During the last two years while elected to USI, I have been living and breathing campaigning. As VP the Southern region and VP for Campaigns, I rolled out campaigns across campuses, connected with students, mobilised locally and built strategies for national campaigns.

Advocacy, for me, does not stop at the door on the way home from work. The passion I've shown for campaigns is still ignited in me and I want to continue to dedicate myself to driving campaigns next year from the ground up.

As a student organisation, I wholeheartedly believe we need to continue to focus on higher education funding, accommodation and much more.

Sexual violence and harassment is rife in our colleges, nurses around the country are being taken for a ride, postgraduate students need workers' rights, pharmacy students and student teachers are being ripped off, students can't get a counselling appointment for weeks, or find a place to go home to after classes.

If USI isn't tackling these student issues and others, then who will?

I have put in an incredible amount of work representing students this year and I would love the opportunity to do it for you again. I am best placed to move us further forward from my experience, relationships built, listening to feedback.... and I have even more ideas to bring to the table.

Vote Michelle Byrne #1 and re-elect me as USI Vice President for Campaigns.

Leon Diop

My name is Leon Diop, I'm 24 years old and I'm currently the President of MSU. As a student union President, I have learned some amazing things about the student movement and the power it can have when we work together in a structured and organised fashion.

I am running to be the next Vice President for Campaigns in the USI and I hope that you will give me your number one vote at congress this year.

I'm running for VP Campaigns because, like many others, I faced a lot of barriers in my time accessing and attending Higher Education.

I believe the USI is a vehicle of change that can work on these barriers to people accessing a good quality education in our country. I believe strong campaigns are the greatest weapon the USI has in breaking down these barriers.

I'm running for VP Campaigns because I know I can bring the creativity, organisation and skills to deliver campaigns that will make tangible change for every single student in Ireland and break down whatever barrier is in our way. My three core points focus on: core campaigns, good governance and union development.

Vote Leon Number 1 for VP campaigns.



Candidate for Vice President for Welfare

Roisin O Donovan

Hello Everyone! My name is Roisin O'Donovan, I'm 23 years old and I'm from Dublin.

I'm the current Vice President of Welfare for the DIT Students' Union (DITSU) and I want to be your next Vice President for Welfare of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI).

The past two years that I've been the Vice President for Welfare in DITSU, I've learnt a lot, both personally and professionally. I know how to manage working on multiple sites, I know how to work with a team of staff members and elected officers, both full time and part time, while representing 20,000.

I know I'm the best person for this job. I'm passionate about anything welfare, enthusiastic, positive and approachable. I'm critical of USI as an organisation because being critical allows for improvements. If elected, I will continue to be critical of USI and of myself as an officer, based off feedback given from students and Student Union's.

Please vote for me to be your next Vice President for Welfare of USI, I would be delighted and honoured to represent you.



Candidates for Vice President for the Southern Region

Darren Malone

Hey! My name is Darren Malone and I am running for the position of USI VP for the Southern Region.

I am the current Deputy President for Welfare in Waterford IT Students' Union and I believe that my experience, dedication and my passion for the student movement makes me the right candidate for this position.

I have been involved in the student movement for five years now, representing students in many different roles such as a Class Representative, two-term Part Time Officer and now as a Sabbatical Officer.

I have amplified the voices of WIT students nationwide on matters, from publicly funded education, accommodation and direct provision to name a few and now I am ready to amplify the voices of students and Officers all across the Southern Region.

If elected to this position, I will be there to represent those who have been left behind and speak up for those who have been left unheard.

I am motivated, hardworking, determined and I can work extremely well both on my own and as a team. These skills will be crucial in order to support MO's and students across the South next year.

Don't be in doubt, Vote Darren for South.



Jessica Murphy

Hi Everyone!

My name is Jessica Murphy, I'm the current President of IT Tralee Students' Union and I'm looking for your support to become the next VP for the South

For those of you who are attending Congress for the first time, welcome! Congress is one of the most incredible events you can go to as a student activist. Use the opportunity to have your voice heard, speak on motions you are passionate about and don't forget to enjoy it!

During my time in the Student Movement, I have been a PTO, class rep, VP for Welfare and currently President of ITTSU. All are roles that I was very proud to fulfill and felt that I did so with passion and dedication, as well as a sheer grá for the movement and the students that I represent. If given the opportunity to be your VP for the South, I promise to give the same level of compassion and commitment to the role that I have for the last 5 years.

I have seen changes in the movement, changes in trends and student culture both locally and nationally. I am confident this is experience that is worthy of your trust



Candidate for Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Megan Reilly

Hi,

I started off in the Student movement as a class rep, went on to become a Part time officer, then Welfare Officer, and I'm now the President of NUI Galway Students' Union.

The Student Movement has always been at the forefront of social justice issues and rightly so. In recent times we have revitalised our activism, proving to ourselves and society as a whole the awe-inspiring power of our movement to truly bring about ground breaking change.

Marginalised groups still face considerable barriers to accessing and continuing education and USI must continue to fight for rights inside and outside the classroom. We still have no hate crime legislation in Ireland, our students in Direct Provision are constantly threatened with deportation orders, our campuses are inaccessible, and that only touches the surface of the issues we are facing.

Starting from a humble '8 ways to make campus more inclusive' poster campaign when I was Equality Officer at NUIG, I have steadily built up a bank of experience and knowledge, always guided by an intersectional approach, and by the people I've met along the way. We have created great change before and we will create it again, and I would love nothing more than to continue to be a part of that.

Le bród, Megan



Candidate for Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Marie Lyons

Hello, I'm a long way from Tipperary spending the last five years in St. Angela's College, Sligo and completed my B.Ed. in Home Economics and Economics spending the last nine months as the President of STACS SU. Prior to being elected as the President I served as a part-time VP Welfare and Equality and Deputy President and as a Class Representative and mentor prior to that.

I feel I give my all too each position and I am driven, student-focused and dependable. I lobbied the College to remove the SU paying half of the medical costs, I secured additional student representation on College Committees and I ensured that students had full control of the direction of their union.

I enjoy working with and for students and I want to be a voice for the students and work with the fantastic officers of the BMW region. I hope to bring a holistic approach to the role as the sole sabbatical officer in STACS I worked on every aspect of student life and I know as a region each MO is different and has diverse issues and I want to work individually with each of you.

Vote Marie #1 for VP BMW!"



Candidate for Vice President for the Dublin Region

Craig McHugh

A Chairde,

Welcome to congress! Is mise Craig McHugh and I am the current VP for Education & Placement in DCUSU and have been involved with the student movement for the last five years starting as President of ISSU and later a DCUSU PTO. I am running for the position of VP for Dublin Region because I want to grow the student movement in Ireland. We need to act radically to win the fight for funding and to do so we need to drastically change how we engage with students on the ground by supporting the incredible activists on campuses to make our campaigns directly relevant.

Furthermore, with the new TU Dublin SU set up – we need to ensure the country's newest (and largest) SU is supported as it grows and matures. Rents are rising too & greedy companies are profiteering off our rental crises by building luxury student accommodation blocks, we need declarations from local councils that these cannot count toward the student bed strategy numbers as they are only making the crises worse and are a barrier to accessing education. I am hoping the Dublin region entrusts me to fight their corner.

Le meas,

Craig



Candidate for Vice President for the Irish Language

Clíodhna Ní Dhufaigh

Is mise Clíodhna Ní Dhufaigh agus táim ag rith le haghaidh Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge in Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn. Is mac léinn iarchéime mé in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad ag tabhairt faoi MA sa Nua-Ghaeilge. Táim fíorphaiseanta agus díograiseach faoin nGaeilge agus ba mhór an obair a rinne mé le linn mo thréimhse i Maigh Nuad an teanga a chur chun cinn, in ainneoin nach cainteoir dúchais Gaeilge mé agus nár fhreastail mé ar Ghaelscoil.

B'aoibhinn liom an deis a bheith ag obair ar son na teanga in AMLÉ agus ceapaim gur cuid lárnach dár n-oidhreacht í. Is teanga ildánach agus nuálach í agus dá dtoghfaí mé, d'oibreoinn go dian chun é seo a chur in iúl do mhic léinn na tíre. Trí sheirbhísí Gaeilge san earnáil phríobháideach agus san earnáil phoiblí a fhorbairt agus a chur chun cinn i measc an phobail agus trí chúnamh a thabhairt dár n-ábhair oide, dár gcomhghleacaithe sa Tuaisceart agus do mhuintir na Gaeltacht creidim go domhain gur féidir linn é seo a bhaint amach.

My name is Clíodhna Ní Dhufaigh and I'm running for Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge in Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn. I'm a postgrad student in Maynooth University, studying a Masters in Irish. I am extremely passionate about the Irish language and have worked tirelessly throughout my time in Maynooth to promote the language on campus, despite not having gone to a Gaelscoil and not having Irish spoken to me at home.

I think the Irish language is a vital part of our history and heritage but has also proven itself to be a modern and versatile language. My campaign focuses on reinstating the Gaeltacht grant for student primary teachers, aiding MO's in the North in fighting for an Irish Language Act, investment in the much deprived Gaeltacht areas, and the development and promotion of services for Irish speakers in the public and private sectors. If elected I would do my utmost to achieve these aims and make Irish as visible and accessible within the Union and aid na hOifigh Ghaeilge in achieving the same.



Candidates for Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Sara Dowling

I am an artist, curator/collaborator, and proud former LSAD Graduate and SU President 2015/6 – the year we first properly integrated LIT and USI's working relationship. I am a current MA student, placed full-time with a local arts organisation, and working several positions both nationally and internationally. I believe the care of Postgrads needs to be more relevant, creative, and accommodating – understanding us as students, proactively sourcing the rights aids, and finding new ways of communication and engagement.

I intend to question whether Institutional promotion of Postgrad courses reflects accurate student experience, giving a greater focus to students working within a professional capacity as part of their course and addressing the vulnerabilities associated (off campus/within organisations/ internationally).

I will also create opportunities for greater Postgrad achievement exposure – through a series of national seminars, specialised talks, large scale expos, presentations and expert advice – a considered professional approach to developing the student community. I also intend to learn from Institutes with established Postgrad structures and help implement them on campuses in need – bringing the national impression of Postgrads to a common recognition.

Get in touch or see my Manifesto for more information.



Jason Kavanagh

Hi Everyone, my name is Jason Kavanagh. I am experienced, hardworking, passionate and love chats about education and postgraduate representation. I am a masters by research student studying public policy in procurement and I am running to be your next Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs.

The Union of Students in Ireland must evolve and develop the representation of Postgraduate students across higher education. We must now, together, lead a national movement demanding equity of access to education for Postgraduates and Undergraduates alike.

I have a proven track record for delivering my goals in a strategic and professional manner. Diverse student bodies have mixed interests and concerns which must be at the forefront of all we do. We are all unique and that deserves unique, creative approaches.

I tune in and gain insight, custom build my strategy per project then deliver and measure the performance.

This will be essential to increasing engagement with the postgraduate community because we must start meeting the interests of our audience, addressing their issues and concerns instead of judging engagement based on what is not relevant to them.

Vote Jason#1 for student input driven decisions, national campaigns, Union development and MO Support to strengthen our movement.



Interim Policies Subject to Ratification by Congress

Between meetings of the USI Congress, USI National Council has the authority to adopt interim policy. This policy is subject to ratification by the Congress at its next meeting. These policies, if adopted, will have a life equal to other policies adopted at Congress.

If not adopted, they will cease to be in force. Some policies adopted by National Council have already naturally expired due to all actions due to them having already taken place - as a result, they are not submitted to Congress for ratification.



AA (NC) 19 - 1 Open Access Policy

Proposed by: VP Postgraduate Affairs

National Council notes:

The freedom of researchers to publish wherever they feel most appropriate.

The need to increase and improve access to the output of research.

The increased digitisation of literature.

The increased price of subscriptions and barriers to access.

National Council believes:

Research must be freely available on the public internet, permitting any user 'free to read' and 'free to re-use' access.

The only constraints on open access should be that it is achieved whilst satisfying the principle that authors be acknowledged through citation for their work, and maintain control over the dignity of their work.

National Council mandates:

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to develop a position paper on open access.

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to collaborate with EuroDoc and other relevant parties to lobby for open access.

Notáí

AA (NC) 19 - 2 Career Guidance Review

Proposed by: Vice President for Academic Affairs

National Council notes:

The Career Guidance Review announced by the Minister for Education, Richard Bruton, in early 2018.

That this review aims to examine all aspects of Career Guidance, including at secondary and third-level.

That an external Consultancy firm, Indecon, is carrying out this review, and that USI aided Indecon in circulating a number of surveys for Further and Higher Education students, and that USI submitted it's own written submission in June 2018.

National Council believes:

That this Review is an important opportunity to consider the role of good career guidance for transition, progression, retention, success, and wellbeing.

That the specific focus of the Review on enterprise engagement should not detract from the views of students in shaping the outcome of the Review.

National Council welcomes:

The Career Guidance Review and the number of opportunities provided to gain the views of students, however, it would have been preferable for the Review to be held during term-time.

National Council believes that:

The Review should conclude that career guidance must be considered as a continuous process, and that a National Strategy should clearly link each level of education and each pathway to promote lifelong learning, supports, and informed decision-making.

The Review must include the need to invest in significant resource, including employing more specific Career Guidance Teachers/Counsellors in Schools after cuts during austerity years, as well as resourcing for Careers Offices at third-level.

National Council mandates that:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs should lobby that any National Strategy or approach requires a new agency for oversight and implementation, that can also create best practice and support continuous professional development in career guidance. This agency should also develop, maintain, and support an online resource that can replace or revamp Qualifax and other tools.

NA (NC) 19 - 1 Air BnB Regulation

Proposed by: Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

National Council regrets:

As of the beginning of August 2018 there was a mere 1,400 houses available to rent in Dublin. At the same time there was in excess of 3,000 homes to let on AirBnB.

National Council notes:

The regulation of short-term letting through agents such as AirBnB in cities such as Amsterdam and Berlin tackled directly the congestion in the availability of housing.

National Council therefore calls upon:

The Government to introduce further regulation of this sector in line with that employed in Berlin in order to increase the availability of housing.

NA (NC) 19 - 2 Separate Church and State

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council notes:

That people in Ireland have different religious and spiritual beliefs or none and we live in a pluralistic society.

National Council notes with concern:

The religious nature of Bunreacht na hÉireann and how it can further impact the advancement of positive change in Ireland.

National Council believes:

That Bunreacht na hÉireann and our laws should be secular and that religious or spiritual faith and practices should have no influence on our legislative processes or laws and that no one religion should have supremacy over others.

National Council mandates:

USI Officer Board to support campaigns and lobby groups working towards a separation of church and state. This includes but is not limited to supporting the provision of objective relationships and sexuality education in schools and removing the offence of blasphemy from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

NA (NC) 19 - 3 Pay Equality for Newly Qualified Teachers

Proposed by: Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Council Notes:

The financial difficulties faced by Newly Qualified Teachers due to the two tier pay system.

Council Further Notes:

Those who entered the profession from February 2012 have been placed on a severely-reduced starting salary which sees them generally earn over 21% less than those appointed prior to 2012.

Council Mandates:

USI Officer Board to support the campaign striving towards equal pay for equal work and to ensure that negotiations are inclusive of the student perspective.

NA (NC) 19 - 4 Boycott Aramark

Proposed by: Vice President for the Dublin Region

National Council notes:

Aramark are contracted by the Irish Government to run three Direct Provision Centres; Lissywollen, Athlone, Co.Meath, Knockalisheen, Co. Clare, and Kinsale Road, in Co. Cork.

National Council further notes:

That Aramark are profiting from the Direct Provision system. In 2016, Aramark received €5.2 million in investment from the Irish government to run the three centres.

National Council notes with concern:

In 2015, residents carried out a hunger strike in the Aramark run centre in Knockalisheen, after people were hospitalized with gastroenteritis as a result of the poorly produced food. A year earlier a hunger strike occurred in the Lissywollen for similar reasons. There has been consistent complaints by those living in the centres as to how they are treated.

National Council mandates:

USI to support and assist the boycott of any Aramark run restaurants, cafés or services.

National Council further mandates:

The USI VP for Citizenship & Equality and the USI President to assist MOs in campaigning

for the removal of Aramark run services on their campuses.

NA (NC) 19 - 5 Supporting the 'Use your brain, not your fists' Campaign

Proposed by: IT Tralee Students' Union

National Council acknowledges

The 'Use your Brain, not your fists' Campaign was run by An Garda Síochanna to highlight the devastation of violent attacks by young people on each other.

National Council acknowledges

That students could imperil themselves and others through violent attacks; and that they may not be aware of the risks or long term effects of their actions.

National Council therefore mandates

That the VP Campaigns & VP Welfare should liaise with An Garda Síochanna in future in relation to this campaign, and to work towards inclusion of key messaging around violent behaviour in future campaigns relating to personal safety.

NA (NC) 19 - 6 Ownership of the National Maternity Hospital

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council recognises:

The long history of the Union of Students in Ireland in campaigning for accessible abortion services in Ireland, and the recent victory in repealing the 8th Amendment from Bunreacht na hÉireann.

National Council notes:

The continued opposition to abortion access by many religiously-based groups throughout Ireland.

National Council notes with concern:

That abortion access could be extremely limited if plans for the National Maternity Hospital to be governed by a Catholic organisation go ahead.

National Council mandates:

USI Officer Board to campaign for the National Maternity Hospital to be taken into public ownership, and that the new maternity hospital be governed by a new, secular charter.

National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Health on this issue.

UO (NC) 19 - 1 Membership of 'Stop Climate Chaos' Coalition

Proposed by: USI President

National Council notes that

'Stop Climate Chaos' is a coalition of civil society organizations campaigning to ensure Ireland does its fair share to tackle the causes and consequences of climate change.

National Council also notes

Current members include development, environmental, youth and faith based organisations.

National Council further notes

USI's commitment to engaging with public representatives and students in education and awareness regarding climate change and sustainability.

National Council recognises

USI's recent commitment to the Stop Climate Chaos lobby of the Oireachtas.

National Council mandates

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and USI President to work with the coalition on its objectives and the aims to influence policy, engage the public and to assist in growing Ireland's climate change movement on campuses.

NA (NC) 19 - 7 ICCL Electoral Law Reform

Proposed by: USI President

National Council notes

A law which was originally intended to prohibit large or anonymous donations to political parties is now being applied to the campaigning work of civil society organisations, preventing them from carrying out their legitimate human rights and social justice work.

National Council notes that

Transparency regarding donations to charities and CSOs in general, and particularly during referendums or elections periods is imperative.

National Council notes with concern

That the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPOC) is now applying the law to civil society's legitimate attempts to bring about change. This places Ireland in the same legal position as countries such as Hungary and Russia which prevent foreign funding of civil society, although in our case these restrictions are the result of poor regulation rather than deliberate policy decisions.

National Council mandates

The USI President to actively support the joint campaign calling for electoral act reform, along with the ICCL, Amnesty, Frontline defenders, Uplift, Transparency International and The Wheel.

EQ (NC) 19 - 1 Women's Day Walkout

Proposed by: USI President

National Council notes:

The 'International Women's Day Committee' is a group of trade union and student activists bringing together a coalition of individual trades union, student and feminist activists with a view to organising action on International Women's Day, 8th March 2019.

National Council also notes

The growing global movement around women's oppression and specifically issues such as femicide and sexual harassment has inspired an international call for action on these issues on IWD 2019. Developments in Ireland North and South over the last year – including the #IBelieveHer and #ThisIsNotConsent movement have highlighted how much these issues are of concern for women and young people.

National Council mandates

The USI President, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Vice President for Campaigns to support the call for action on IWD 2019, including support for the initiation of actions across the country, including walks outs in workplaces and colleges, creative symbolic actions, and culminating in an assembly on O'Connell Bridge in Dublin (and similar assemblies in other cities) at 3pm on IWD 2019.

EQ (NC) 19 - 2 Solidarity with NUS-USI 'Trust Us' Campaign and Abortion Access in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council recognises:

The collaborative efforts in campaigning for abortion access in Ireland by students all over Ireland.

National Council notes the following:

The 1967 Abortion Act of the UK Parliament was never extended to Northern Ireland.

Abortion is available in Northern Ireland only where there is a risk to the life, or to the long-term mental or physical health of the pregnant person. This excludes cases where there is fatal foetal abnormality, or a pregnancy as a result of rape or incest. In most circumstances, abortion is a criminal offence punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act.

The Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Service has initiated criminal proceedings under sections 58 and 59 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act for unlawful procurement of abortion and abortion pills in a minimum of three separate cases since 2016. An April 2016 case resulted in a suspended sentence of 3 months' imprisonment, and in January 2017 a couple received formal cautions for attempting to procure an abortion with pills.

In October 2017, the UK Department for Women and Equalities announced that it would cover the cost of treatment for pregnant people who travel from Northern Ireland to England for abortion care. As a result, pregnant people lawfully resident in Northern Ireland and registered with a local GP will now be offered free abortions at the point of access if they travel to England to exert that right.

Although abortion on request is now legal up to 12 weeks in the Republic of Ireland, this change does not mean that people in Northern Ireland will stop travelling to Great Britain for abortion. The current provisions for Northern Ireland residents accessing abortion services in the Republic of Ireland require Northern Irish residents to pay to access care privately and comply with the mandatory three day waiting period. Travelling to Great Britain remains the cheapest and least complicated method of accessing legal abortion for Northern Ireland residents.

It is expected that by the end of 2019, it will be possible for residents of England, Scotland and Wales to take abortion pills at home once they have been prescribed. Northern Ireland residents who have to travel to Great Britain to access early medical abortion will not benefit from the shift to home use: they will have to take both abortion pills in Great Britain before travelling home. Meanwhile an individual who induces an abortion with the same medications (Mifepristone and Misoprostol) at home in Northern Ireland is at risk of prosecution.

National Council further notes with great concern that:

Although people who travel from Northern Ireland to England to access a termination are eligible to receive free abortion care on the NHS as of November 2017, the cost and logistics of arranging transport, accommodation, time off work and childcare continue to present practical barriers to accessing abortion outside Northern Ireland.

Obtaining an early medical abortion by purchasing abortion pills online is a method of abortion which is frequently relied upon by people who face additional barriers when travelling to access abortion, or find it impossible to travel altogether. Victims and survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities and people with caring responsibilities can find themselves in this position.

The criminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland deters people from accessing aftercare, for fear of being reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland if they disclose that they induced an abortion with medication.

Students who move to Northern Ireland for study effectively sign away their abortion rights

when they register with a local GP because access to abortion is so restricted on the Northern Ireland NHS.

National Council believes that:

Individuals who make the decision to terminate a pregnancy should be supported and cared for in their local healthcare system, rather than disempowered and isolated by having to travel elsewhere to do so.

Access to reproductive healthcare is a student welfare issue. The lack of access to abortion services in Northern Ireland can significantly impact the personal and academic lives of students with crisis pregnancies. The inaccessibility of safe and legal abortion in Northern Ireland places an undue burden on students in an already stressful situation.

Abortion should be governed by the same robust regulatory and ethical frameworks as all other medical procedures.

Abortion reform should be designed in a manner which is inclusive of women, trans men, non-binary and gender fluid people.

National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, in solidarity with NUS-USI, to campaign for accessible reproductive healthcare and the removal of barriers to abortion access in Northern Ireland.

National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the NUS-USI 'Trust Us' campaign for the decriminalisation of abortion in Northern Ireland and actively engage with NUS-USI to ensure our solidarity is as effective as possible.

NA (NC) 19 - 3 Support the fight for marriage equality in Northern Ireland

Proposed by: Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

National Council notes:

Northern Ireland is the only region in the UK where same-sex marriage is still not legally recognised, despite huge support among the public in Northern Ireland. According to a 2016 Ipsos MORI poll, 70% of the public in Northern Ireland are in support of marriage equality.

National Council notes with concern:

That according to the Mental Health in Northern Ireland: Fundamental Facts research, reduced LGBT+ rights in Northern Ireland has led to a mental health crisis in the community, with 5% of LGBT+ individuals self-harming compared to 13% in rest of UK, 57% drinking to hazardous levels compared to 24% in England, and 25% attempting suicide

National Council believes:

That everyone should have equal access to civil marriage, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

National Council mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to support the Love Equality Coalition campaign for equal marriage in Northern Ireland.

National Council also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the USI President to publish a statement of support for the Love Equality campaign in pursuit of marriage equality in Northern Ireland from the Union of Students in Ireland and encourage other LGBTQ+

organisations to do the same.

National Council further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to endeavour to include opportunities for students to learn about the political climate with regard to marriage equality in Northern Ireland at LGBTQ+ training events.

Policies Due to Expire

Policies which have been adopted by Congress have a natural life of three years. At the third Congress after the adoption of a policy, some policies are selected by SU officers to be readopted. These are selected in a ballot and the policies receiving support for reconsideration are placed before USI Congress for its consideration. These policies were passed in 2016 and 2013. If readopted this time, these will be submitted to USI Congress in 2022 for reconsideration.



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)

Notaí

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.

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 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 10 REVIEW OF CRITERIA FOR TU DESIGNATION

Congress notes:

That current USI policy mandates Officerboard to lobby Government to maintain the current criteria for the re-designation of an Institute of Technology as a Technological

University, while also protecting the individual nature of Institutions as part of this process.

Congress recognises:

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

Congress observes:

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

Maintenance of L6/7 provision

Excessive/unfocused increases in post graduate provision and research

Testing the validity of international student numbers

Congress notes with concern:

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

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

Congress therefore mandates:

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

13 AAQA 11 STUDENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

Congress observes:

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

Congress recognises:

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

Congress acknowledges:

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

Congress notes:

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

Congress therefore mandates:

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

13 AAQA 12 UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

Congress notes:

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

schemes.

Congress further notes:

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

Congress acknowledges:

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

Congress further notes:

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

Congress therefore mandates:

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

The Department of Social Protection and the Higher Education Authority

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 8 Organ Donor Cards

Congress Notes:

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

Congress Further Notes:

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

Congress therefore Mandates:

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

Congress further Mandates:

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

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

16 WEL 13 Gambling Awareness Campaign & Protocol

Notáí

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 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 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 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 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.

Notáí

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:

(Already Repealed)

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 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

[List of Policies Already Repealed]

Congress Adopts

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy

Congress Mandates the Vice President for Campaigns with responsibility for Union Development:

To both follow the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Union Development Vision 2020 Strategy and assist local officers in following through with its recommendations by disseminating the strategy at the start of the year and to continue throughout the year.

16 UO 15 Student Sport and SSI

Proposed by Athlone ITSU

Congress Notes

That participation in sport can play an important part in the maintenance of good mental health.

Congress also notes

That sport tourism is playing an important role in the recovery of Ireland as a tourist destination.

Congress Observes

That currently the Union of Students' in Ireland currently does not hold a position on the board of Student Sport in Ireland (SSI) formally CUSAI, the governing authority of the

majority of student sports in Ireland.

Congress Mandates

That the Vice President for Welfare seek a position on the board of SSI before the end of 2016.

16 UO 17 Democratic Review

Proposed by the Presidents' Committee

Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland makes every attempt to be as transparent and democratic as possible in its dealings.

Congress further notes:

Even with consistent effort procedures can sometimes be overlooked or ignored.

Congress mandates:

The President (who may delegate to a nominee) to establish a review group to carry out the following work:

Review the democratic procedures of the organisation including but not limited to:

Officer Board elections

Committee elections & nominations

Oversight of all areas reviewed.

Consult with members of the reviewed committees on said committees' operations.

Investigate to what extent the National Council is aware of such procedures.

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 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.

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 iarbunscoileanna.

Aithníonn an Chomhdáil chomh maith

An easpa dul chun cinn aontaithe nó gníomhach leis na fadhbanna seo a réiteach.

Cáineann an Chomhdáil

An tionchar diúltach atá aige seo, toisc nach bhfuil polasaí soléir deartha, a fheabhsódh teagasc na Gaeilge, agus gur féidir le lucht na Gaeilge a thacú agus a bhrú.

Sainordaíonn an Chomhdáil

Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge le taighde a stiúradh, i bpáirt leis na hAontais múinteoireachta, na heagraíochtaí Gaeilge, coláistí oideachais, idir dháltaí, mhúinteoirí, agus eile, agus comh-thuairisc a fhoilsiú, a leagfadh amach straitéas fórsach, cuimsitheach, agus iltaobhach i leith múineadh na Gaeilge sna bunscoileanna agus iarbunscoileanna. 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 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.

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.

Motions Before USI Congress 2019

Motions before Congress are arranged into debate sections, which are outlined in the document below. Some motions which do not strictly deal with 'student issues' (in the National Affairs and International Affairs Sections) require a 2/3 majority of those present and voting to pass and become policy. Where this has been determined to be the case, it will be noted alongside the motion.



International Affairs

IA 19 – 1 Non EU International Students

Proposed By NUI Galway Students' Union

Congress notes:

Within the confines of a severely underfunded Higher Education system, many institutions are looking to internationalise as a means to increase fee income.

Congress condemns:

International students being used as a source of revenue, and the fact that there are not adequate supports in place for international students who study here.

Congress notes with concern:

Non EU international students are often excluded from funding pots, for example, funds for Students with Disabilities and Field trip funds.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Education and skills for funding streams to include non EU international students.

Equality

EQ 19 – 1 International Students Access to Multi Re-Entry Visa

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

The large number of international students that come to Ireland every year to study, but are only in receipt of a single-entry visa.

Congress further Notes:

the challenges in being granted a multi-entry visa in Ireland, which restricts students entering and leaving the country.

Notáí

Congress Regrets:

That this has a negative impact on students seeing family and friends whilst studying abroad.

Congress Believes:

The importance of welcoming international students to Ireland to add to our already diverse and inclusive student environment.

Congress Mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality and the Garda National Immigration Bureau for easier access to the multi-entry visa for international students.

EQ 19 – 2 Students in Direct Provision:

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Working Group

Congress commends:

The work done to date by the Union of Students in Ireland and students' unions across the country towards ending the inhumane system of Direct Provision and working to protect and support students living in Direct Provision in their institutions.

Congress notes:

More and more asylum seekers are entering third level education, whether through access routes or Institution of Sanctuary scholarships. It is of great concern that College of Sanctuary scholarship students can be faced with deportation orders when they are in the middle of their studies.

Congress applauds:

The work done by DCUSU in particular around the Save our Shepherd campaign, and the incredible success of that campaign.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Department of Justice to take a person's student status into special consideration when in the asylum process.

Congress also mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to devise a national strategy on what to do in the case of a student being faced with a deportation order, and to develop materials and resources around this for Students' Union officers.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby the Minister for Education to extend domestic fee status to students who are asylum seekers across all third level institutions.

EQ 19 - 3 Supporting Student Parents and Carers

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union [UUSU]

Congress Notes:

- The significant number of students in third level education in Ireland who have dependant children or other caring responsibilities.
- The additional barriers facing student parents & carers which often interfere with their academic career and limit their scope to engage outside of the

classroom.

- The childcare costs incurred by student parents which normally cannot be fully met by grants which they are eligible for.

In spite of this, many institutions do not have sufficient services and facilities in place to support those with caring responsibilities such as creche facilities and funding support, and do not fully consider the needs of student parents in the coordination of timetables.

Congress Believes:

It is imperative upon students' unions and USI to support the interests of student parents and carers and help to support them throughout their academic career. Individual MOs can make more progress on this issue locally, when they work collectively on this issue.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to produce guidance notes for MOs on how to further improve the experience of student parents & carers in their institutions, focusing on areas such as class timetabling, childcare support and inclusivity of events.

EQ 19 - 4 The abolishment of MSM blood donation deferral period

Proposed by Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes:

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) needs 3,000 donations a week to supply 71 hospitals nationwide. Regular blood donations by a sufficient number of healthy people are needed to ensure that safe blood will be available whenever and wherever it is needed. Blood transfusions are needed for women with complications of pregnancy, many complex medical and surgical procedures and for those undergoing radiation or chemotherapy to name a few.

Congress also notes:

The IBTS have set strict guidelines for those who eligible to donate to ensure that all donations are safe to use and to protect donors and recipients.

Congress further notes:

The lifetime ban on gay men donating blood to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service (IBTS) was lifted in January 2017 and replaced with a 12 month abstinence deferral period which means that a man who last had sex with another man (MSM) more than 12 months ago is now be able to donate blood if he meets the other blood donor selection criteria.

Congress notes with concern:

Eligibility decided on sexuality is extremely discriminatory and no one should be denied the right to donate blood based on their sexuality.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Equality and Citizenship campaign for the abolishment of the deferral period to ensure that MSM who meet all other eligibility criteria will be eligible to donate blood in Ireland.

EQ 19 - 5 Accessibility audits

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

Congress notes:

Many campuses are inaccessible in many ways to students with disabilities. Examples of this include physical infrastructure such as ramps and working lifts etc. as well as not

having clear markings across campus for students with visual impairments.

Congress further notes:

A lack of proper facilities can act as an ongoing barrier to students with disabilities towards completing their education.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to work with AHEAD to develop an accessibility audit template for campuses, which can be given to MOs to carry out across their own campuses.

EQ 19 – 6 Hate Crime legislation

Proposed By NUIG Students' Union

Congress notes:

Post the introduction of the Prohibition to incitement of Hatred act 1990, very little legislative changes have taken place in Ireland to further protect and defend minority groups from acts of hate crime.

Congress further notes:

The Irish Council of Civil Liberties report The Lifecycle of a Hate Crime: Country Report for Ireland, launched in July 2018, found that Ireland has significant gaps in Irish law, policy and criminal justice practice regarding acts of discrimination against minorities, which go largely underreported. Ireland currently is one of a small number of EU countries that does not have specific laws around dealing with hate crimes.

Congress acknowledges:

As we grow as campus communities, diversity is reflected in our student population more and more. Students from non traditional backgrounds may find their access to education restricted by such acts.

Many students from minority groups face discrimination; in particular, members of the Trans Community, students with disabilities, and those from Ethnic minority backgrounds can find themselves the targets of hate crime. This affects students across a range of issues of accommodation, transport, online interactions and many other areas of life.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to ensure there is adequate student representation involved at a national level for any legislation being drafted.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to lobby for hate crime legislation to be enacted in Ireland

EQ 19 – 7 Gender Equality

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

The lack of policy in relation to transgender, non-binary and intersex students, and gender identity/expression inclusivity within higher education. Research from LGBTI Ireland Report (2016) found that transgender, non-binary and intersex people face additional challenges in their day-to-day lives such as being referred to/as by the wrong pronoun or gender and this can have an immensely negative impact on a person's mental health.

Congress Believes:

We need to lead the way in supporting transgender, non-binary and intersex students

within higher and further education.

Congress Mandates:

VP Equality and Citizenship to develop a campaign in conjunction with relevant organisations such as ShoutOut, BeLonG To and TENI to support Students' Union Officers in running a transgender, non-binary and intersex awareness and inclusivity campaign on campus for both staff and students which should include information packs, posters, workshop materials and leads to further resources.

Congress Further Mandates:

USI VP for Equality & Citizenship to gather and circulate all relevant HEI and SU policy relating to transgender, non-binary and intersex gender identity and expression policies.

EQ 19 – 8 Supporting Students with Religious Beliefs and Rituals

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

All MO's have a very diverse community of student members who have specific religious beliefs and rituals.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship to provide elected officers with information on how best to support students who have religious beliefs and rituals. This may include lobbying for improved facilities, catering services and supports.

EQ 19 – 9 Disability Awareness and Annual Conference

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Congress notes:

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

Congress notes:

The Union of Students in Ireland is committed to removing the stigma from all disabilities, challenging perceptions and encouraging all members of our society to take a positive attitude towards understanding the nature of disability and overcoming prejudices.

A key part of this ongoing work can be done through student engagement and campaigns throughout the year, including a national-level event, to create a space for networking, dialogue, and empowerment to leadership roles.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to roll out a campaign informing students of many different disabilities and creating awareness of supports for students with disabilities.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to organise a one day conference and networking event for students with disabilities before the end of April in each academic year.

EQ 19 – 10 Equality Strategy 2019

Proposed by Equality and Citizenship Committee

Congress notes:

The area of Equality and Citizenship is extremely broad and expands into many different aspects of the work of the Officer Board. For this reason, it is important that there is a roadmap to assist the work of the Union of Students in Ireland in how to best ensure the brief is effectively carried out, to the best ability.

Congress mandates:

The adoption of the proposed Equality Strategy 2019.

EQ 19 – 11 EMpower students

Proposed by The VP for Equality & Citizenship and Maynooth Students' Union

Congress notes:

Ireland has become more diverse in recent years. There has been an increase in people from Ethnic Minority background enrolling in institutions across the country and this will continue to rise.

Congress notes with alarm:

That students from ethnic minority background can be underrepresented in positions of leadership and representation. This can include, students' union positions, class representatives, clubs and society committee positions etc.

Congress applauds:

The success of Pink Training, Women Lead, the conference for students living with disabilities, and similar events in the promoting of minority students running for leadership positions.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to run an event called the 'EMpower Initiative'. This event will focus on increasing Ethnic Minority representation in positions of leadership in institutions across Ireland.

Irish Language

IL 19 – 1 Semester 1 Seachtain na Gaeilge

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress Notes:

The hard work and emphasis put into Seachtain na Gaeilge during Semester 2 of the Academic year.

Congress further Notes:

Due to the timing of Seachtain na Gaeilge and annual SU elections, these two sometimes clash for many MO's which can mean Seachtain na Gaeilge gets put to one side.

Congress Believes:

Seachtain na Gaeilge is an important national campaign that should also be delivered

throughout the year.

Congress Mandates:

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to run a Semester 1 Seachtain na Gaeilge campaign, including a roadshow to highlight and celebrate our national language.

IL 19 – 2 Irish language: Use your Cúpla Focail

Proposed By NUI Galway Students' Union

Congress commends:

The great work done by the LÚ Don Ghaeilge this year with the focal an lae on social media, and how this has encouraged a more mainstream approach to the Irish language.

Congress regrets:

Many people have Irish, but don't make use of the language.

Congress mandates:

The LU don ghaeilge to roll out a 'Use your cupla focail' online campaign

IL 19 – 3 Cearta Teanga / Language Rights

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go bhfuil neart plé sna meáin faoi Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla.

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go mbíonn daoine ar gearán faoi easpa cearta teanga go minic, agus go raibh feachtas an-éifeachtach (#nílsécg, #faighdofada) eagraithe ar líne.

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge tacú le feachais faoi na Cearta Teanga agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge dul i dteangmháil le hOifig an Coimisinéir Teanga chun nasc a chruthú leo.

Congress Notes

The constant media attention surrounding the Irish Language Act, and the upcoming Official Language Bill.

Congress Understands

There is regular cause for complaint due to the lack of language rights, with a very successful online campaign (#faighdofada, #nílsécg)

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to support campaigns about language rights, and to contact the office of an Coimisinéir Teanga in order to build a connection.

IL 19 – 4 Na Táillí Gaeltachta / Gaeltacht Fees

Rúin Ón Coiste Cultúrtha

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

Go gcaithfidh na hábhair oidí tréimhse a chaitheamh sa Ghaeltacht chun clárú leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Go raibh feachtas éifeachtach eagraithe in 2018 (#GaelFees)

Tuigeann an Comhdháil

Go bhfuil an costas a bhaineann le na cúrsaí seo ró-ard agus go mbíonn na hábhair oidí faoi bhrú maidir leis an gcostas. Chomh maith leis sin bhí maoiniú ann roimh 2012 chun cabhrú leis an gcostas.

Mar sin, aisghaireann an Comhdháil

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge forbairt a dhéanamh ar an bhfeachtas #GaelFees in éinteacht le Conradh na Gaeilge agus go gcaithfidh an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge stocaireacht a dhéanamh faoin gcostas.

Congress notes

Student teachers must spend time in the Gaeltacht in order to register with the Teaching Council

Congress further notes

There was an effective campaign organised in 2018 (#GaelFees)

Congress understands

The cost of these courses is very high, putting student teachers under financial pressure. There was funding available for these fees before 2012.

Thus, Congress repeals

12 AA 6

15 GA 3

Therefore, Congress mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to continue lobbying on the Gaeltacht Fees and to develop the #GaelFees campaign further

IL 19 – 5 NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Congress Notes

The formation of the NUS-USI Irish Language Task Force in 2018/2019

Congress Further Notes

The training opportunities provided to Irish language Activists in 2019

This motion thus repeals

14 G 4

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to provide continued support for the NUS-USI Irish

IL 19 – 6 Student Teacher Campaign

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Congress Notes

The teacher supply shortage in Ireland and the high cost of teaching courses

Congress Further Notes

The benefit of data produced from the USI Student Teacher Report in 2017/2018

Congress Mandates

Officer board to review the data from the Student Teacher Report and expand the existing online forum for student teachers

IL 19 – 7 NUS-Cymru

Rúin Ón Leas-Uachtarán Don Ghaeilge

Tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara:

An obair atá ar siúl sa Bhreatain Bheag chun na Cearta Teanga a chur chun cinn

Anuas air sin, tugann an Comhdháil faoi deara

Go bhfuil NUS-Wales agus na Coláistí sa Bhreatain Bheag ag déanamh an-iarracht chun na Cearta Teanga a chur chun cinn

Mar sin, sainordaíonn an Comhdháil

Gur cheart don Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge dul i dteangmháil le NUS-Wales, na coláistí sa Bhreatain Bheag, an Coimisinéir Teanga agus tuairisc a scríobh chun forbairt a dhéanamh ar scéim teanga AMLÉ

Congress Notes

The work taking place in Wales in order to promote Language Rights

Congress Further Notes

The hard work done by NUS-Wales and affiliated colleges in order to promote Language Rights

Congress Mandates

The Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge to contact NUS-Wales, affiliated colleges and the Language Commissioner, create a report on findings in order to develop the USI Language Scheme

Citizenship

CZN 19 – 1 Introduction of Students in Leadership Campaign

Proposed By IT Tallaght Students' Union.

Congress recognises:

The importance of students in leadership and students being given the tools, training and equal opportunities to these resources regardless of gender, sexuality, religion, race or creed.

Congress Acknowledges:

The work that has been done on the Women in Leadership campaign to date and what the campaign has done for women in leadership roles across the country.

Congress further recognises:

That students in leadership roles in colleges do not have an equal opportunity to avail of training and resources that students who are eligible to attend Women in lead do.

Congress therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to create a new campaign, network and training for all students in leadership. The same level of training, support and resources that currently exist in women in leadership should aim to create this all inclusive and diverse students in leadership campaign.

CZN 19 – 2 Irish Nationality and Citizenship

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Council notes:

In 2004, 79% of the public voted in favour of a constitutional amendment which would remove the automatic right to citizenship for children born in Ireland. The following was inserted into Bunreacht na hÉireann,

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, a person born in the island of Ireland, which includes its islands and seas, who does not have, at the time of the birth of that person, at least one parent who is an Irish citizen or entitled to be an Irish citizen is not entitled to Irish citizenship or nationality, unless provided for by law.

Council further notes:

That this constitutional amendment leaves many who were born here and who have been resident in Ireland throughout their lives, facing an uncertain legal future and in some cases, the threat of deportation.

Council notes with concern:

Nationality and citizenship has a huge impact on accessing education, considering the financial barriers facing those when classified as international students, although they were born in Ireland and have lived in the state since.

Council therefore mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to lobby for provisions to be made by the Oireachtas for jus soli citizenship and to support bills brought through the Oireachtas which would improve access to education for those living in Ireland.

CZN 19 - 3 Diversity in Leadership

Proposed by Letterkenny Institute Of Technology Students' Union, St. Angela's College, Sligo Students' Union, Institute Of Technology, Sligo Students' Union.

Congress notes:

The massively positive impact of the Women in Lead and Pink Training events have had on the numbers of self-identifying women and members of the LGBTQAI+ Community in

leadership positions within our Students' Union and recognises there is still much to do in order to eradicate inequalities experienced by these groups.

Congress further notes:

Students from ethnic groups, mature students, students with disabilities, lone parents and carers, students from Further Education and students in direct provision and asylum seekers are underrepresented in positions of leadership within our institutions and a focus on an intersectional campaign inclusive of all students within the Irish Education system. The vision for the National Plan for Equity of Access was "to ensure that the student body entering, participating in and completing Higher Education at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population." (National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2019, 7) This document outlined the targeted under-represented groups include:

- Entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education.
- First time, mature student entrants.
- Students with disabilities.
- Part-time/flexible learners.
- Further education award holders.
- Irish Travellers

The Progress Review of the National Access Plan and Priorities to 2021 outlined an increase in the number of students within the HE sector from these under-represented groups has increased. With an emphasis on encouraging students from these groups entering Higher Education there needs to be a focus on encouraging these students into positions of Leadership within our Students' Unions structures.

Congress mandates the Vice President for Campaigns, Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and the Regional Vice President's:

To establish a training event similar to Women in Lead to include groups with low representation in student leadership positions. This event will be followed up with regional support and include feedback from participants to ensure the continuous growth of the training.

CZN 19 – 4 Deposit and return schemes

Proposed By NUI Galway SU

Congress notes with concern:

Ireland is failing to meet its 2020 carbon emission targets to combat climate change, and leaves itself open to large fines as a result.

Congress recognises:

Sustainability has been proven to be a massive student issue, this year the Student Movement was a leading force in Climate case Ireland, and SUs across the country are continuing work inside and outside their institutions on sustainability .

Congress commends:

Deposit and return schemes in many European countries. These schemes encourage people to recycle plastic in exchange for money.

Congress welcomes:

The Repack Machine in UCC allows recycling of plastic, while also raising money for UCCSU designated charities, and the positive impact this has had on their campus.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship and USI President to lobby the Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment to introduce a national deposit and return scheme, and to lobby for economic supports for the introduction of such schemes.

CZN 19 – 5 Diversity in Leadership

Proposed By Dublin City University SU

Congress notes

the success and effectiveness of women in leadership series on women in politics and society

Congress believes

representation of minority groups is struggling

Congress mandates

vp for equality and citizenship to setup diversity in leadership series to tackle this!

CZN 19 – 6 Diversity in Leadership

Proposed by Border, Midlands & Western Region Group

Congress notes:

The lack of Diversity in full time elected sabbatical officers in Member Organisations of USI.

Congress applauds:

The fantastic job done by Women in Leadership Training and the significant work that has been undertaken by MOs in empowering women to run for leadership positions. 2018/19 sees the rewards of this with women now dominating the number of elected MO Officers.

Congress calls for:

More inclusivity and diversity amongst elected Students' Union Officers.

Congress therefore Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to take the template Women in Leadership and adapt it to create a weekend training event with the aim of empowering minorities to run for leadership positions.

Congress therefore Repeals:

15 EQ 1

14 EQ 1

CZN 19 – 7 Referendum on the Extension of Presidential Voting Rights

Proposed by Vice President for Equality and Citizenship

Congress notes

The upcoming referendum on the extending Presidential voting rights to Irish citizens living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

Congress recognises

That Irish citizens, regardless of their location, should have the right to vote for their nation's head of state.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to campaign in favour of extending Presidential voting rights to those living outside of the Republic of Ireland.

Notáí

Union Organisation

UO 19 – 1 USI Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin SU

Congress notes:

The cyclical nature of student representative terms leads to a regular change in priorities and shifts in focus of the national movement. This often weakens the ability for the movement to gather momentum on the issues which lie at the core of the student movement.

Congress further notes:

Changes made to Union structures are often made without strategic forethought.

Congress understands:

Strategic planning is an organisational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organisation's direction in response to a changing environment.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns and the President, in consultation with National Council, devise a strategic plan for the Union of Students' in Ireland to run from 2020-2025, and for this plan to be ratified by Congress 2020.

Congress further mandates:

A working group of National Council be established to oversee and inform the development of the strategic plan.

Congress further mandates:

The President to publish an annual progress report on this Strategic Plan and present it to annual congress.

UO 19 – 2 Governance training modules

Proposed By Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes:

As sabbatical officers, we are expected to sit on a number of academic and governing boards within our HEI's and much of the discussion at these meetings can contain language that is new or uncommon for officers to have consistent knowledge of.

Congress therefore mandates:

The President to introduce new governance training modules for SUT and SUT+ which cover business and legal terminology, negotiation skills and top things for SU Officers to look out for and query during meetings. More detail on the contents of this training can be covered in the SU Officers Handbook.

UO 19 – 3 Regional Officer Support with Mergers:

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

There are a number of mergers that are either prior or post designation in many MOs across the country.

Congress further notes:

The merging of different MOs can be a difficult and an overwhelming process. The transition from being a single entity to becoming a part of a larger establishment can be daunting not just for the overall union but the officers involved.

Congress mandates:

The regional officers to liaise with the MOs involved in mergers to ensure that each of these MOs (and officers) feels represented, well-equipped and supported going through this transition.

Congress further mandates:

The regional officers to establish a working group for MOs involved in a merger process. This would provide a space for the MOs to give advice on how they dealt with going through a merger.

UO 19 – 4 Sponsorship Agreements and Commercial Partnerships

Proposed by Presidents Working Group

Congress Notes

USI may wish to work alongside companies throughout the year based on shared interests or common goals. This can sometimes take the form of a partnership agreement between the employer and the USI which identifies their common interests and objectives. USI voted through UO5 USI Commercial Strategy last year, and this motion would add to that strategy.

Congress Further Notes

USI has engaged increasingly with commercial organisations for sponsorship of USI events and support for venue hire, catering and materials.

Congress supports and encourages

USI in seeking sponsorship in order to reduce costs and add value to events for members.

Congress Understands

That the ability to seek out and secure sponsorship offers varies depending on the project involved and the financial benefit offered and is regularly time sensitive.

Congress mandates

The USI President to engage and notify SU Presidents on potential sponsorship agreements, in order to make note of any concerns which may be raised based on previous experiences with such organisations/companies with member organisations of USI. If any conflicts arise with entering into particular sponsorship arrangements, this can be dealt with by USI early in the process.

Congress further mandates

The USI President and VP Campaigns to create a policy regarding commercial partnerships, following consultation with MO sabbatical officers and USI Officerboard. This policy would cover how partnerships are sought out, agreed upon, and the length of time they are active for.

UO 19 – 5 Strategic Review of USI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

USI has not undertaken a strategic review of the organisation since 1999. In 2015, USI adopted a Union Development Strategy 2015 - 2020, which outlines a vision and strategy for developing not only Students' Unions but also USI as an organisation. This has yet to be fully implemented.

Congress Notes with Concern:

That USI is not performing to its fullest potential and is becoming an organisation in desperate need of reform. Member Organisations continue to be frustrated at the lack of support from USI and question the value of being a member.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to carry out a robust strategic review of USI including, but not limited to, areas of governance, finance, democracy, political lobbying and campaigns. The review should be undertaken by an external consultant and must take into account the opinions and concerns of all current Member Organisations, as well as potential candidate Member Organisations where possible.

Congress further Mandates:

That the USI President ensures that the strategic review considers the 2018 motion on USI Commercial Strategy. (2018 UO5) The review should provide a report to the December National Council in 2019 with a list of recommendations in which USI must adopt no later than July 2020.

UO 19 - 6 USI in the North

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU)

Congress Notes:

The long-established trilateral agreement which entitles students, studying in Northern Ireland to be represented by NUS UK and USI, through its' principal representative body NUS-USI, with the former acting as managing partner for NUS-USI.

An estimated 200,000 of USI's 374,000 members are NUS-USI members of which approximately 160,000 come from FE colleges. The Further Education & Training Strategy, passed by Congress in 2018 sets out a direction of how USI ought to interact with FE members in the North.

Despite this, there is a lack of consistency in how USI engages NUS-USI members in its' work with FE members rarely being included in USI campaigns.

Congress Further Notes:

Recent changes to NUS UK's operations have resulted in a reduction in staff support for NUS-USI, with representation now being provided by one full-time officer, supported by two full-time staff members.

Congress Believes:

The reduced staff support puts significant strain on the NUS-USI President's capacity to represent and campaign on behalf of their 200,000 members in the North.

In light of this, it is imperative for USI to recognize its' role in supporting the interests of its' NI members.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI to further extend its' engagement with members in the North, with each portfolio officer aiming to incorporate NUS-USI and its' members in at least one relevant campaign per year.

USI Portfolio officers to work collaboratively with the NUS-USI President and their counterpart members of the NUS-USI REC (Regional Executive Committee), where applicable, to support campaigns and events being run by NUS-USI.

USI Officer Board to consult with NUS-USI in extending its prominence within NI student affairs more generally.

UO 19 – 7 Regional Officers

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

The benefit of having Regional Officers on campus.

Congress further notes

The experience and direction regional officers can give to local MOs is of great benefit.

Congress mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to work with MOs before the beginning of the academic year to schedule at least four visits per semester.

UO 19 – 8 Media Training

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

Students' Union officers are regularly sought for interviews with local and national media outlets.

Congress further notes

That training for all sabbatical officers is expensive and that Students' Unions may have to subsidise such training.

Congress mandates

The VP for Campaigns to provide opportunities for Media Training to sabbatical officers who wish to avail of such.

UO 19 – 9 Progress Report on mandates

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

USI officer board has been mandated to take on a large number of motions. It is not realistic to complete all of these mandates in one year.

Congress recognizes:

The hard work being put in by officer board to complete a large amount of motions.

Congress regrets:

There is no transparent indicator of how far along these mandates have gotten.

Congress mandates:

All officer board to produce a progression report in their officer report of the development of these mandates at each National Council.

UO 19 – 10 Accommodating for Ents, Marketing and Commercial during SUT+

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

SUT+ is additional training during the summer period of which this year amalgamated what was previously known as 'Top Up' training into the week too.

Congress Further Notes:

Due to this amalgamation, there was little training for officers in areas revolving Entertainments, Marketing and Commercial Activities as this was not previously catered for in the 'Top Up' training schedules. When all officers are present for other elements of the SUT+ schedule, it is vital to use this opportunity to increase capacity of those officers.

Congress Believes:

August is a vital time for bookings for events such as Freshers' Week and there should be a working group and/or top up training for these officers to make proper use of the time present at the event.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officer Board to ensure that there is an Ents, Marketing & Commercial working group available at SUT+ and that there are training events available to Ents, Marketing and Commercial officers that is relevant to the time of their work with big events approaching such as Freshers Week.

UO 19 – 11 Check-ins with Ents, Commercial and Marketing Working Group

Proposed By IT Carlow SU

Congress Notes:

Throughout the year, there are many events that can cause a lot of stress to the officers organising them.

Congress Further Notes:

When organising these events such as Freshers Week or Raise and Give Week, it can impact on the mental health of these officers. The officers may feel like they are the only officers in that position. Also since it is such a busy time of the year, there may be a lack of communication with officers in Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group, so officers may not be able to communicate with other officers in the same position.

Congress recognises

As many officers who are involved in organising events for their SU are part-time officers, working groups at National Council during term time may not be suitable.

Congress Believes:

Following the success this year, video-call check ins have proven to be greatly beneficial to officers organising events, especially those officers that may not be able to travel to every National Council. A video-call may only take an hour out of each officers time, however it gives officers the platform to explain what they are going through and share experiences and advice.

Congress Mandates:

USI Vice President over Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group to ensure that these video-calls happen at as regularly as needed with a special focus the busy times such as before September and February.

Congress Further Mandates:

USI Vice President over Ents, Marketing and Commercial Working Group to have check-ins regularly to individual MO's that have busy time periods of organising events.

UO 19 – 12 Re-think Campaign

Proposed By President, IT Carlow Students' Union

Congress notes:

That the USI have and will continue to do incredible work on behalf of the students across Ireland. That valuable work that is performed by officer board in conjunction with MO's can easily go un-noticed by the students that the USI represent.

Congress Further notes:

That a campaign to reconnect the USI with the students that it represents is greatly needed to bolster the great work that both officer board and local Unions do.

Congress therefore mandates:

The VP Campaigns to develop a "Re-connect" campaign to reconnect the national union to the students that they represent.

UO 19 – 13 USI Ambassador/s

Proposed By Institute Of Technology Tralee Students' Union

Congress Notes:

The importance of student input from a grassroots level within USI. This input can then go towards helping USI see what areas need bolstering in terms of local student engagement.

Congress Also Notes:

That Students' are often unaware of the work being undertaken on their behalf on a National Level, often due to the heavy workloads of individual MO's, where the promotion and acknowledgement of USI centric activities are not often of the highest priority.

Congress Mandates:

The relevant regional officers to work with MO's to recruit local a USI Ambassador/s from among the local student population to liaise with USI and MO's on a part-time voluntary basis to disseminate the work being done by USI on a national level to their student body.

Congress Repeals

17 NC/UO 07

UO 19 – 14 Deputy President Working Group

Proposed By ITBSU

Congress Notes:

USI provides working groups that act as supporting structures that helps not only guide, but also acts as a group for collaboration, idea sharing, problem solving and so much

more.

Congress Welcomes with Concerns:

With the establishment of the Technological University Dublin Students' Union coming into effect and with other institutes gearing up/applying for Technological University status, there is now a risk that this role will be left unsupported within our National Councils.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to delegate facilitating an ongoing working group to a member of Officer Board, with a preference to the Deputy President at the time.

Congress Further Mandates:

The working group be titled "Deputy President Working Group" with the same rules as President's Working Group and is a group facilitated at every National Council, which shall be composed of senior sabbatical officers to focus on individual campus issues.

UO 19 – 15 Accountability of National Council

Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress recognises

The important discussions and decisions that are made at National Council and sub-committees of National Council.

Congress notes

That sometimes officers are unavailable to attend National Council or all of the sub-committees of National Council and may not be aware of the discussions and decisions are taken at these meetings until documentation for the following National Council is circulated.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to ensure that all minutes from National Council and sub-committees of National Council are circulated to all National Council members within 10 working days.

UO 19 – 16 Part Time Officer Training

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

Congress recognises

The importance and value of having part-time officers and executive members trained in skills that will help them to achieve their goals within their local Students' Union and on a National Level.

Congress values

The training possibilities within USI and external organisations that are offered to Students' Union part-time officers and executive members.

Congress understands

That each Students' Union team may have different part-time officers and executive positions and that these may require different training to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills to carry out their role.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice Presidents for the Regions to carry out a needs-based assessment of training required for each Students' Union part-time officer/executive member and provide training in the manner which best meets those needs.

UO 19 – 17 Students' Union Officer Handbook

Proposed by the Vice President for the Southern Region

Congress recognises

The role of a Sabbatical Officer within a Students' Union is a unique role. It is also very important to have a well-rounded understanding of how to approach your role as an Officer within a Students' Union and that a well-developed crossover is extremely valuable for newly elected Officers.

Congress understands

It can be helpful to have a source of information provided to Students' Union sabbatical Officers that cover areas they may find useful throughout their term in Office such as effective communication, event organisation, useful contacts and a jargon buster.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to publish a Students' Union Officer Handbook before SUT each year to support newly elected officers.

UO 19 – 18 Inclusion of UN Sustainable Development Goals

Proposed by VP Welfare

Congress notes

That in 2015, the UN introduced the resolution, "Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", and with those, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice.

Congress also notes

That much of the work currently undertaken by USI are linked to sustainable development, and hence these goals. Our work on quality education (SDG4), Mental, Sexual and Physical Health (SDG3), gender equality (SDG5) and reducing inequality (SDG10) are core to USIs values, and mission, and are directly linked to the aims of the SDGs.

Congress further notes

The added benefits of promoting our work in this framework, and the progress that is to be made by linking with other organisations with similar aims.

Congress therefore mandates

USI Officer Board to SDG-Proof its future campaigns, policies, and other relevant areas of their work. This should involve, but is not limited to, linking our campaigns to the SDG goals, including SDG information in our social media channels (especially during campaign weeks), and working with external bodies to align our work more in line with these goals.

Congress further mandates

That USI Officer Board work with external organisations to help them better align their work with these goals.

Proposed by Ents, Marketing & Commercial Working Group

Congress notes

The Give Us The Night is an independent volunteer group of professionals operating within the night-time industry, campaigning for positive changes to nightlife in Ireland, with particular regard to music venues. They endeavour to highlight the contribution of the night-time industry to culture, community and the economy in Ireland, and to raise the quality of nightlife to international standards. Their ongoing aim is to create debate and discussion about the licensing laws in Ireland, with a view to influencing legislative changes.

Congress notes

The importance of such a campaign to students and Students' Unions who often play a part in an active nightlife on and off campuses.

Our members can see these effects in many areas including but not limited to;

- Organising events: SUs liaise with promoters/venues for events who are directly affected by these laws.
- Venue closures: Many students' unions have expressed concerns with their local nightclubs/late night venues closing in the recent year, this may be due recent to recent increase in costs in licences.
- Staggered closing times: after large events, safety issues can arise due to venues all closing at the same time - we would benefit from a staggered closing time and later opening hours.
- Employment: According to the USI survey conducted relation to the hospitality sector, 70% work in Food & Beverage and a further 7% in Events.
- Graduate employment: Many students who study courses such as music, sound engineering course would benefit from the employment opportunities that would result in the core aims of the campaign being realized.

Congress mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial activity to support the Give Us the Night Campaign who's core aims are the following;

- To support, nurture and reframe the conversation around nightlife and the night-time economy in Ireland.
- To highlight the economic value and societal benefits of a diverse and vibrant Irish night-time industry.
- To contribute to the creation of jobs and sustainable indigenous businesses within the night-time industry, and to broaden employment opportunities for those operating in the creative arts.
- To ensure that Ireland adopts a more progressive European approach to nightlife, that reflects the wide range of lifestyles and working hours here.

Congress further mandates

The USI Officer with responsibility for Ents, Marketing & Commercial to lobby relevant people to ensure the student perspective is heard in the campaign.

UO 19 - 20 Student Activist Groups

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

The importance of students at the core of the success of USI campaigns.

Congress commends

The hard work of student activists throughout the year.

Congress further notes

That students engaged in activism reap educational benefits such as developing a greater sense of social responsibility and identity. It is also important for teaching students about the importance of democratic participation, leadership and the ability to build coalitions amongst a wide variety of individuals on campus. (Barnhardt, Reyes, 2016)

Congress mandates

For USI Officer Board to engage with student activists and grassroots campaigns, where possible, in the running of their campaigns and to actively seek out opportunities to engage with established student activist groups.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to set up Facebook Groups for students who share common interests from all over Ireland to facilitate opportunities for networking, sharing information and easily mobilising students.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to where possible, attend events and support the work of (what is currently known as) the All Ireland Student Activist Network and similar groups like it.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to run non-violent direct action training, which is open to students, each year.

UO 19 – 21 Trade Unions Partnerships and Workers' Rights Campaign

Proposed by the Union Development Working Group

Congress Regrets:

That there are incidents where abuses of workers' rights are leaving students concerned about whether they will have enough work or finances to afford attending third-level or afford to live once they graduate.

Congress Notes:

That there is a need for students to become aware of their rights as workers. 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, previously approved by the Executives of both Unions in 2013.

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 Vice President for Campaigns to work towards an update of the SIPTU-USI partnership as needed and promote it to members.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for Campaigns to work towards building alliances 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. These partnerships should have a particular focus on free/reduced cost membership to access to the services of those trade unions that match their area of study or part-time work while studying.

Congress also mandates

The VP for Campaigns to advocate for elected Students' Union officers and their staff to become members of a union.

Congress also Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns and USI Officer Board to endeavour 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.

Congress Mandates:

The USI Vice President for Campaigns to roll-out an evidence-based Workers' Rights Awareness Campaign for students in conjunction with SIPTU and other trade unions.

Congress 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.

Repeal

16 UO 12 Worker's Rights Awareness Campaign

UO 19 – 22 the use of technological development to allow MOs to join national council

Proposed by Limerick IT Students' Union

Congress notes

There is an appreciation for USI's ethos of inclusive and rotary locations for their events. The various locations allow MOs to build informed comparisons to their own Institute or University.

Congress further notes

In some cases, it can be difficult for MOs to travel to every location- particularly for the non-centralised MOs.

Congress mandates

The USI President to thoroughly investigate an allowance for MO Representatives to join USI National Council events through technology, on giving notice.

This technological development should offer a capped number of times per year, for MO representatives to join same- in keeping with the benefits of face-to-face interactions at National Council events.

This capped number of times per year would be based on the Presidents' agreed schedule of National Councils.

National Affairs

NA 19 – 1 Garda National Immigration Bureau Process for non-EU students.

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

Congress Recognises

The current process for GNIB registration for students coming from outside of the European Union is costly and repetitive.

Congress further recognises

That the high cost of renewing your application annually combined with the bureaucracy of the process is not fit for purpose.

Congress further recognises

That the travel restrictions which activate through the GNIB process are counter intuitive to a postgraduate working and academic life.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to lobby the Department of Justice and Equality, and any party they deem appropriate, to reform the process and make it more accessible and equitable for students.

NA 19 - 2 Post March 29th: Brexit Support

Proposed By Ulster University Students' Union (UUSU)

Congress Notes:

At time of writing, the United Kingdom is set to exit the European Union on March 29th.

If a deal is not struck, the EU would begin to trade with the UK under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Policy previously passed by Congress in 2016 which mandated USI to 'actively campaign to ensure that the rights and values of the student movement are not diminished or ignore.'

EU students studying in the UK and UK students studying in the Republic of Ireland have been guaranteed home fee status for 19/20, but no such guarantee has been made beyond.

Congress Believes:

No-Deal Brexit could have disastrous consequences for the lived experience of students across the island, and will lead to uncertainty around fees, research funding and cross-border mobility amongst many issues.

Any future detrimental change to fee status for ROI or EU students studying in the North or vice-versa would be entirely unacceptable.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to work with the Vice President for Equality & Citizenship to support MOs to work with their institution in supporting students in their colleges who have been affected by the outcomes of Brexit.

The USI President to consult with the NUS-USI and NUS-UK Presidents to lobby institutions and government against reclassification of fee status for UK and ROI/EU citizens studying in ROI/EU and the UK respectively.

NA 19 - 3 Integrated Education in Northern Ireland

Notáí

Proposed by Ulster University Students' Union

Congress Notes:

Education in Northern Ireland is divided and typically segregated along religious lines.

There are around 70'000 empty desks in the school's system across the North.

Divided education systems create a lack of consistency in the quality and content in the education received, particularly in areas such as religious education and sex education.

Congress Recognises:

That divided education isolates communities and does not contribute to progress towards a shared future in Northern Ireland.

That educating all children together at a primary and secondary level is an essential part of the reconciliation process and of building a society that celebrates respect, understanding and friendships across traditional divides.

Divisions cannot be expected to be healed if children are taught separately and don't meet someone of a different belief or background to themselves until they reach university.

Congress Mandates:

That USI President should consult with NUS-USI for fully integrated education at primary and secondary level within Northern Ireland whilst respecting people's right to choose where they send their children.

The USI Officer Board should work alongside stakeholders with similar interests and outlooks such as the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) to achieve this.

NA 19 - 4 Expansion of student Leap Card

Jointly Proposed by GMITSU And NUI Galway SU

Congress Notes:

Most colleges have a large percentage of commuting students, especially since the price of renting accommodation has increased largely over the last couple of years. Public transport in most areas is acceptable but still needs more investment especially in rural areas.

Congress further notes:

The National Transport Authority (NTA) leap card has made the price of public transport cheaper within city boundaries but not from commuter towns and cities, meaning many students who commute everyday are forced to buy tourist tickets.

Congress recognises:

Cheaper and improved public transport would incentivise more students to use it and reduce congestion and the need for housing in most HEI towns/cities. More affordable public transport options also widens the radius of housing to students further out than just city boundaries.

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to negotiate with the NTA to improve and extend the limits of use for the Student Leap Card, making access to institutions cheaper and more accessible.

NA 19 - 5 Protection of Employee Tips Bill Campaign

Proposed by GMITSU

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress Notes:

Currently in Ireland there is no legislation for ownership of tips for employees in the hospitality sector in which they work.

Congress Further Notes:

There is no legal obligation for employers to re-issue tips or to have a structure in place to ensure employees received their tips. This has allowed employers to place restrictions on the allocation of tips.

Congress Recognises:

That employers often capitalise on this fact to take tips that rightfully belong to the employee.

Congress Further Recognises:

The legislation will give transparency to where tips go, for the staff and customers who reward the tip!

Congress Mandates:

The USI President to lobby TD's to ensure that, "the Protection of Employee Tips Bill" that's passed through the Seanad gets through the Dáil to become Law and our students that work in that sector get what they're owed.

NA 19 - 6 BusConnects - Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

Congress notes

The recent BusConnects Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign Consultation Process.

Congress further notes

The impact that the redesign could have on students.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to inform MOs of the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign when it is reviewed.

Congress further mandates

The Vice President for the Dublin Region to collect feedback from MOs on the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign and collate it in to a report.

NA 19 - 7 Privatisation of Public Transport

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress notes with concern

The recent privatisation of several Dublin Bus routes;

17a (from Blanchardstown to Kilbarrack)

33a (from Balbriggan/Skerries to Swords/Dublin Airport or Dublin City Centre)

33b (from Portrane to Swords)
 45a, 45b (from Dún Laoghaire to Kilmacanogue)
 59 (from Killiney to Dún Laoghaire Station)
 63, 63a (from Dún Laoghaire Station to Kilternan Village)
 75, 75a (from Tallaght to Dún Laoghaire)
 102 (from Dublin Airport to Sutton Station)
 111 (from Dalkey to Brides Glen)
 175 (from Citywest to UCD)
 184 (from Bray to Newtownmountkennedy)
 185 (from Bray to Enniskerry)

Congress further notes

That in October, the National Transport Authority (NTA) announced its intention to tender out 10% of Bus Éireann routes.

Congress worries

That the continued privatisation of public transport will increase costs and have a negative affect on students.

Congress mandates

The USI President to make representations and lobby against the privatisation of public transport.

NA 19 – 8 Minimum Graduate Wage for Students Graduates

Proposed By GMITSU

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress Notes:

Students are exposed to precarious work, zero-hour contracts and low wages whilst supporting themselves in college and early years of their careers

Congress Regrets:

That the increase in the cost of living and a relatively stagnant minimum wage has grown the divide between what students earn, and what students need to earn to meet the cost of living.

Congress Recognises

That a living wage provides for someone to earn the minimum required to live.

Congress Mandates

The President of USI to initiate campaigns and lobbying efforts to increase the minimum wage of graduates.

NA 19 – 9 Right to Higher Education

Proposed by The USI President

REQUIRES A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO PASS

Congress recognises

That there is no constitutionally recognised right to Higher Education in Ireland.

Congress welcomes

The ruling of the Irish High Court, who recognised that in order to be economically and

socially prosperous, it was imperative that citizens have access to higher education.

Congress Believes that

Ireland, as a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, should pursue improved access to Higher Education.

Congress mandates

The USI President to actively work to ensure that reference to that convention is throughout the work of the department and other agencies, and to explore ways and means to ensure

Congress Further mandates

The USI President to lobby for the Higher Education Authority Act to reflect in its wording that third level education is a public good that must be accessible.

NA 19 – 10 Higher Education Funding Campaign

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Congress notes

The formation of a Coalition for Public Funded Education in recent years, which was driven by USI and includes SIPTU, IFUT, IMPACT, TUI and ISSU. This collaboration with like-minded organisations, who support our funding position and see Higher Education as a public good, strengthens the campaign.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to ensure the continuation of and engagement with the Coalition for Public Funded Education.

Congress notes

The previous research done by the NERI institute in 2013 on Higher Education Funding, led by the USI-SIPTU partnership called 'We Need to Talk about Higher Education', which was adopted by Congress in 2013.

Congress notes

The need for an updated single comprehensive and researched document on the public-funding model proposed through various USI policies. This will provide 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 mandates

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to seek to update the previous research conducted by the NERI institute in line with the current situation in higher education and commission other areas of research that will also benefit the campaign where needed.

Congress mandates:

The USI President and Vice President for Campaigns to create a sustained national campaign on Higher Education Funding, backed by research and supported by the Coalition, to include investment in Higher Education, supports and towards a model of fully publicly funded education.

USI Officer Board to campaign and lobby extensively for the future funding of the Irish Higher Education system.

Repeal:

14 AAQA 1 USI/NERI THIRD-LEVEL FUNDING POLICY

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

NA 19 – 11 Ride sharing app for students

Proposed by Limerick IT Students' Union

Congress notes

The rate of student commuters is rapidly growing in Ireland. This results in more students driving to and from college, particularly in the West. Universities, Institutes and Councils are reluctant to develop on carparking facilities, this is not in line with the parking demand.

Congress notes with concern

This development is threatening to further impact our Carbon Footprint, combating the hard work done by students regarding sustainability and Climate Change.

Congress mandates

USI President, Vice President for Campaigns and the Regional Vice Presidents to investigate and work with interested MOs and students, in developing a **'ridesharing-hailo app'** exclusive for students and University/ Institute Staff.

For the above mentioned positions, to lobby NTA and the Government to support and to further endorse such developments

Academic Affairs

AA 19 - 1 Learning Outside of the Classroom

Proposed by Ulster University Students' Union

Congress Notes:

The NUS and BUCS 'Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free' campaign which has supported Students' Unions across the UK to lobby for dedicated time to be set aside in the academic timetable to allow students to participate in clubs, societies, volunteering and other co-curricular activity.

The plethora of research, demonstrating the link between physical activity and improved quality of life.

Congress Believes:

Participation in co-curricular activity, such as involvement with clubs and societies has a positive impact on student satisfaction and retention, and consequently on student success.

Having space in the academic calendar also improves access for students who work while studying and those with caring responsibilities.

Not having dedicated space within the academic calendar to support such activities puts increasing strain on student experience and discourages students from getting involved with University life outside of the classroom.

Congress Mandates:

USI Officerboard to research 'Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free' and similar schemes with a view to proposing a universal system for supporting co-curricular engagement.

USI Officerboard to undertake research on the links between co-curricular engagement

and student retention and success in order to support MOs to lobby their institutions to develop timetabling that supports this activity.

AA 19 - 2 College Awareness Week

Proposed by Vice President For The Dublin Region

Congress notes

That College Awareness Week is a national campaign which aims to promote the benefits of going to college, to help students of all ages to become college-ready and to showcase local role models.

Congress mandates

USI Officer Board to promote College Awareness Week.

Congress further mandates

Where possible, USI Officer Board to arrange a talk in a secondary school in their local area and to give advice about going to college.

AA 19 - 3 The creation of a Charter for Postgraduate Research Students

Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

Congress Recognises

That there is a lack of consistency within the Higher Education sector on what rights postgraduate student have within their institution.

Congress Further Recognises

That there is a need for clarity on a range of issues from access to the HR department in the case of a work place dispute to access to staff printing.

Congress Notes

That the "USI/SIPTU Postgraduate Survey on Working and Economic Conditions" provides sufficient evidence in this regard.

Congress Mandates

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to try to work with SIPTU to develop and promote a Charter of Rights for Institutions to sign up to, which will set out best practice for a healthy working environment for postgraduates.

AA 19 - 4 The creation of National Minimum Stipend rate.

Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs

Congress Recognises

That the stipend rates received by Postgraduate Research Students varies dramatically.

Congress further recognises

That the cost of living is rising whilst stipends remain relatively stagnant.

Congress mandates

That USI Officer Board lobby for the creation of a National Minimum Stipend Rate.

Congress further mandates

That this objective be pursued with the ambition of paring the National Minimum Stipend Rate to the cost of living.

AA 19 – 5 Postgraduate Funding in Northern Ireland

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group

Congress Notes:

- The Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan in Northern Ireland which only entitles students to £5,500 towards the cost of postgraduate taught course.
- Tuition Fees for standard Masters courses in Northern Ireland are set to rise to £5,900, with many other Masters programmes costing much more but tuition fee loans will not automatically rise in line with this.
- Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK to cap tuition fee loans for Postgraduate students at £5,500, meaning that students are offered no maintenance support.
- That many postgraduate students in Northern Ireland opt for part-time study in order to be able to work alongside their degree.
- The insufficiency of the current funding system for part-time students where the loan must be split equally across years regardless of whether there are differential fees within the course, resulting in some students being left with a shortfall in their second or third year, which has led to some students being forced to withdraw from the programme.
- Due to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Executive in 2017, there is currently no Minister in place to approve an increase in the tuition fee loan available to Postgraduate students or to commission any change to the current Postgraduate Funding system.

Congress Believes:

- The current funding arrangements for postgraduate students in Northern Ireland are wholly inadequate, providing no maintenance support whatsoever and not covering the entire cost of standard Master's programmes, or any programmes with higher fees.
- A review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland must be commissioned, in order to improve the support offered to students there and improve the coherency of funding arrangements for part-time students.

Congress Mandates:

The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs to work with NUS-USI and its' members to lobby for a review of postgraduate funding in Northern Ireland with a view to increasing available support whilst continuing to strive towards lobbying for publicly funded education, accessible to all.

AA 19 – 6 The legal status of a PhD student.

Proposed By Postgraduate Working Group.

Congress notes

That currently PhD students are classified as students.

Congress further notes

That there are many benefits to this status, such as exemption from tax.

Congress further notes

That there are also a range of problems with this student definition. Inclusive of but not limited to; no application of a minimum wage and access to HR in the case of a dispute.

Congress acknowledges

That Ireland and the United Kingdom are an outlier when compared to other European States and our fellow members of Eurodoc.

Congress mandates

The VP for Postgraduate Affairs to continue to investigate options to secure more rights for Postgraduate students by lobbying for a change to the definition of a postgraduate, whether moving to define them as an employee or a hybrid status between employee and student.

AA 19 – 7 Academic Calendars and Repeat Results implications

Proposed By Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress Notes

Academic Calendars within Higher Education Institutions can cause a lot of difficulties for students on the ground. Some Institutes may use the Academic Calendar as an instrument to move Exams to wherever they like.

Congress Acknowledges

The lack of a "perfect model" when it comes to Academic Calendars. But also, the lack of Best Practice when it comes to creating an Academic Calendar.

Congress Believes

Working with MO's and Trade Unions to form a joint approach on Academic Calendar Best Practice would help all Institutions and SU's make sure that the needs of students are met academically.

Congress Recognises

The release of Repeat Examinations 2-4 weeks into a semester has a serious impact on Student Mental Health and that to release Repeat Examination Results earlier may help tackle retention in HEI's.

Congress therefore Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs, alongside the Regional Officers, to consult with MO's and Trade Unions to develop a best practice when it comes to Academic Calendars. The VP for Academic Affairs should also investigate the possibility of an Academic Calendar sub-committee of National Council who will report their findings to National Council.

Congress Further Mandates

The VP for Academic Affairs to investigate the effects on students having repeat examinations results released so late in term and use that to lobby the relevant bodies to get Repeat Examination results released earlier and if possible, before the semester begins.

AA 19 - 8 The Future of the Irish Survey of Student Engagement

Proposed by Waterford IT Students' Union

Congress notes

That the Irish Survey of Student Engagement (ISSE) is now well recognised across Irish Higher Education, having launched in 2013 after a number of years of lobbying from USI to ensure colleges across the country saw the value and need to gather empirical data from students.

Congress further notes

That USI, Students' Unions, and students have worked hard to ensure that the survey is recognised and engaged with by students, and have advocated to ensure the data is readily available for students to interpret through institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes. This further manifested itself in the development of the postgraduate research ISSE which launched in 2018.

Congress notes with concern

That despite the huge efforts of students and rising response rates that institutions are still largely failing to distil the data in to user-friendly formats, that they have not created thorough processes for involving students in interpreting the data they created and understand, and have in some cases blocked students from seeing any results.

There are also very low response rates for the survey in a number of HEI's.

Congress believes that

ISSE data should be readily available to students in appropriate formats to allow them to interrogate the data and seeks ways to enhance and improve education in Ireland. Furthermore, Students' Unions are often the main driving force behind promoting the survey, using their own human and financial resources, and should have a partnered role in using the data.

Congress therefore mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to lobby the ISSE Steering Group to develop and publish an updated report (furthering on from 2015's report) on the promotion of the survey, a review on how involved individual SUs are on each campus, and on how the data is being used by students in each HEI. Alongside this, a review on why response rates are low needs to be covered in this work also, which may in turn lead to a restructuring of the overall survey.

The report should contain key recommendations on the role of Students' Unions and students in promotion and in the use of data by students for quality enhancement.

Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs explores ways to develop best practice on the use of ISSE data by students, including ways in which the data can be viewed, distributed, and engaged with by students and staff in partnership.

AA 19 – 9 Best practice for MO Council Meetings

Proposed By IT Tallaght SU

Congress notes:

The differing structures for Council or equivalent class representative meetings.

Congress believes:

The introduction of Best Practice in Council (or equiv.) training at SUT would be beneficial for not only MOs but also class representatives

Congress further notes:

The implementation of these structures would also benefit class representatives unfamiliar with USI Congress procedures.

Congress mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, in conjunction with Regional Officers, to facilitate training for structures and procedures within these bodies at SUT.

AA 19 – 10 Student Representation in Accreditation and PSRBs

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) oversee accreditation and standards across many programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions in Ireland, ensuring that the students who enter these programmes receive qualifications that qualify them to practice in their chosen profession.

Congress further notes

That PARN (Professional Associations Research Network) carried out a project with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in 2016/17 on the impact of accreditation bodies in Irish HEIs, but that the subsequent report did not contain any information on the role of student representation and voice.

Congress believes

That issues arising in degree programmes in disciplines such as teaching, pharmacy, and social work, to name a few, have demonstrated that the student voice is often sidelined in the setting of standards and guidelines by PSRBs.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to liaise with the QQI to ensure that student representation is recognised and strengthened in quality assurance and enhancement processes that involve PSRBs. This work should draw on international best practice and involve students from across a range of degree programmes, in order to ensure that the diversity of experiences of students is captured and acted upon.

Congress further mandates

That part of this work should be to utilise the QQI's engagement with regulators to open dialogue on the importance of student representation in their processes and procedures.

AA 19 – 11 HEI Student Success Strategies

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That every public HEI must have a Student Success Strategy in place by 2020 under a requirement of the HEA System Performance Framework.

Congress further notes

That USI was involved in the HEA Student Success Working Group that considered how to ensure student progression, retention, and completion became integral to the existing work on access stemming from the National Access Plan. The work of USI and others such as the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning ensured that the definition of student success was not limited in scope, and should encompass all aspects of the life of students in and outside of college.

Congress notes with concern

That HEIs seem either unaware of the need to produce such strategies, or that they do not see these strategies as a priority, despite the short amount of time required to develop them. HEIs also seem unaware that student success has a wider remit than access initiatives, encompassing (but not limited to) everything from the background and personal lives of individual students to the student services they need, to teaching and learning, extra-curricular activity, academic supports, health and wellbeing, student representation, and finances.

Congress believes

That the inclusion of student success by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning as one of four major strategic priorities and their upcoming development of national guidelines as key to overcoming these challenge.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to consult with MOs to include the student perspective on what success means, taking due regard of student diversity, and to develop tools and resources alongside the National Forum for member Students' Unions to use to ensure that they are central to developing HEI Student Success Strategies as partners in the process.

Congress further mandates

That the VP Academic Affairs should consider all such relevant USI mandates that contribute to the success of students before, during, and after their time in college, in order that the work of the National Forum is fully informed by USI.

AA 19 – 12 Grade Inflation

Proposed by Vice President Academic Affairs

Congress notes

That there is a rising conversation in Ireland and globally in Higher Education about the issue of 'grade inflation', which refers to improving grades across the student body.

Congress notes with concern

That the debate on grade inflation and its causes has excluded the rising standards in teaching and learning, the changing nature of assessment, the rise of student engagement and partnership, and more active attempts to improve student-centred learning and feedback.

Congress realises

That there are valid concerns on many of the potential causes for grade inflation, including a lack of clarity around grading practices and external examination, however this should not give rise to anti-student rhetoric and attempts to deny students their hard earned academic success.

Congress mandates

The Vice President for Academic Affairs to ensure that any work on grade inflation in Ireland, undertaken by any national body, includes student representation and takes full account of the changing nature of the teaching and learning environment.

Congress further mandates

That USI Officer Board challenges and counters anti-student rhetoric in the grade inflation debate.

AA 19 – 13 Best Practice Framework for Student Rights

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

Congress Notes:

The framework for assessment and examination guidelines vary between each Institution in Ireland. Many member organisations run a version of my rights campaign which encompasses student rights within their institution.

Congress further Notes:

Due to this, it is difficult for USI to run a national my rights campaign with generic and national student rights information. This can lead to students being unaware of their basic rights within their respective courses.

Congress Believes:

That a standardisation of assessment and examination guidelines would benefit not only the everyday student, but also the frameworks would better facilitate these students when transferring between Institutes.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to seek a framework for best practice of student rights across all institutions with the view to standardisation of these campaigns. This should be completed end of the 2019/20 academic year.

AA 19 – 14 Student Feedback and TUI

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

Student feedback on assessments and modules is vital to the upkeep of standards of quality assurance in all third-level institutions.

Congress further Notes:

Student feedback is vital for implementing change in the relevant module and course, in order to keep up with the development of courses.

Congress Regrets:

The reluctance of the Teachers Union in Ireland (TUI) to accept the proposed changes for effective anonymous student feedback.

Congress therefore Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the TUI to review their current stance on student feedback and encourage relevant officers in member institutions to implement similar feedback structures locally.

AA 19 – 15 Creative Arts Networking

Proposed By National College Of Art And Design Students' Union And Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

Within many of the USI MOs there are Creative Arts courses that are underrepresented locally, as well as nationally, and offer unique issues to their students. Networking within the Creative Arts is essential for progression and identification of further development.

Congress further notes:

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

Congress recognises:

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

Congress repeals:

2019 AA 6

Congress mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs, and VP Campaigns to create a Creative Arts subcommittee that tackles issues that are exclusively faced by Creative Arts students. This subcommittee will consist of the VP for Academic Affairs, VP for Campaigns, at least one representative from each MO that specialises in Creative Arts, and any other representatives.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs and VP Campaigns, to organise a one-day networking event for Creative Arts students to discuss and educate artists on issues such as, but not limited to, funding, internships, and taxes as a freelance artist.

AA 19 – 16 Erasmus Rights

Proposed By ITBSU

Congress Notes:

The large number of Students who study abroad during the course of their studies.

Congress Regrets:

Many students can feel lost or unsupported before and during their time abroad.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Academic Affairs to lobby the European Students' Union (ESU) to provide general resources for participating Erasmus+ institutions (e.g. info on accommodation, finance, transport links) and to investigate flaws in the current Erasmus+ system.

AA 19 – 17 Amendment to the FE Development Strategy

Proposed by the Southern Regional Working Group

Congress recognises

The importance of ensuring all students in both further and higher education are fully represented within the Union of Students in Ireland.

Congress applauds

The work was undertaken to develop the USI FE Strategy that was passed by Congress in 2018.

Congress mandates

The following section to be included in the FE Strategy under the "Our Further Education Members in NUS-USI" Actions Section

"Vice Presidents for the Regions to conduct study visits to FE colleges who are members of NUS-USI to learn about the structures and procedures. Vice Presidents for the Regions can use this learning in helping to develop FE colleges to become full members of USI."

AA 19 – 18 Clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of Technological Universities and Borrowing Models for IOTs

Proposed by Limerick IT Students' Union

Congress notes

Given the fast pace development of Higher Education in Ireland our regional IOTs must be

protected. For years IOTs across the country have continued to suffer a deflating financial state. As it stands IOTs cannot borrow money in the such ways Universities can; there is a lack of clarity around the borrowing capacity of the newly developed Technological Universities.

Congress further notes

This raises significant concerns and issues for IOTs, regarding their progress and status advancement in the same way of Universities and that expressed by Technological Universities.

Due to the inability to borrow and minimal funding from the HEA, IOT's will continue to struggle in delivering adequate modern higher education: digitalisation, investment in modern STEM equipment and campus development.

Furthermore, the inability to access additional funding inhibits IOTS to help combat the accommodation crisis, as they cannot build, forcing them to rely on external development.

Congress notes with concern

The lack of clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of Technological Universities threatens, that IOT students will graduate with a less recognised degree. With less opportunity during their studies due to the Institutes inability to deliver as a result of no additional funding.

Congress therefore mandates

The USI President as a member of the HEA board to seek clarity around the borrowing and recognition status of TUs in comparison to IOTs.

To highlight same with the HEA and to lobby the Government for IOTs to access additional funding, in line with Universities and Technological Universities.

Congress therefore deletes

17 AA3

Welfare

WEL 19 – 1 Abortion Information in SHAG Packs

Proposed By ITBSU_

Congress Notes:

That the USI Sexual Health, Awareness and Guidance (SHAG) packs are a greatly appreciated by MO's.

Congress Welcomes:

The legalisation of Abortion in Ireland in January 2019.

Congress Mandates:

The VP for Equality and Citizenship along with the VP for Welfare to provide abortion information in every SHAG Pack.

WEL 19 – 2 Decriminalisation of Drugs

Proposed by VP Welfare

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. In 2016, USI Congress mandated Officer Board to lobby for decriminalisation, and in 2018, Officer Board had developed connections with external expert groups to promote harm reduction campaigns and promote decriminalisation models.

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 Officer Board 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.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare, and VP Campaigns (with the aid of Officer Board), to run an information campaign for students to educate them of the need for this reform.

Congress further mandates

The VP Welfare to provide appropriate information and supports to MOs to best understand these issues, and to promote such campaigns in their own unions, and to appropriate bodies in their own institutions.

WEL 19 - 3 Investment in Mental Health Care in Rural and West of Ireland

Proposed By GMIT SU

Congress Notes:

Mental Health supports and preventative ongoing care provisions are lacking in Ireland, leaving many without adequate, if any supports especially in rural and the west of Ireland.

As well as this, gaps in the system and miss-information has seen students wrongly 'transferred' to services which aren't capable/exist for that purpose.

Congress Further Notes:

Ongoing Preventative Mental Health services are necessary for general wellbeing and not just for emergency cases where focus currently lies, increased investment in preventative services can help us stop the loss of student lives in disadvantaged and under resourced areas, these people are the future of Ireland.

Congress Recognises:

The need for more investment and resources in early and ongoing care and awareness, with this also assisting in reducing the pressure on emergency services

Congress Mandates:

The USI Welfare Officer to lobby for ongoing Mental Health services in the west and rural Ireland inclusive of non-emergency services as well as bringing awareness to the current situation in order to highlight the need, and aid the lobbying for this investment.

WEL 19 - 4 Undetectable = Untransmittable

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

That there has been a significant increase in HIV diagnoses within Ireland in recent years. The level of new HIV diagnoses is the highest on record to date with at least one diagnosis being issued every 18 hours on average. The stigma surrounding HIV in Ireland prevents us from tackling the epidemic and lowering HIV diagnoses.

Congress further notes:

The "PARTNER 1" and "PARTNER 2" studies showed that if someone living with HIV, who are virally suppressed from antiretroviral therapy (ART) medication, cannot transmit HIV to a sexual partner. This is known as "Undetectable = Untransmittable," or "U=U".

Congress mandates:

The VP for Welfare to organise a national campaign, which would be brought to every MO, to highlight and educate students on the term "U=U," or "Undetectable = Untransmittable." This campaign should emphasise the increasing diagnoses of HIV in Ireland and highlight the benefits of knowing your HIV status.

Congress further mandates:

The VP for Welfare to produce a document containing information about STI checks, including, but not limited to, information regarding STI's, how, where and when to get STI checks, and how much they cost.

WEL 19 - 5 Local Specialised Sexual Health Services.

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes:

The importance of students having local access to specialised sexual health services.

Congress further notes:

The student cohort is a demographic most at risk of obtaining sexual health infections/diseases.

Congress mandates:

THE VP for Welfare and the officer board to lobby the HSE and government to provide local access to Specialised Sexual Health Services in every town/city with a third level institution.

WEL 19 – 6 Financial Funding for Accommodation and Mental Health Services.

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress Notes:

Crisis in relation to financial funding for accommodation and mental health services across the board, in particular relation to IOTs.

Congress mandates:

USI President to lobby the HEA and government for a relaxation on existing framework to provide grants for IOT to accommodate for crisis levels within accommodation and mental health sectors.

WEL 19 – 7 Excessive alcohol consumption campaign for secondary and third level

Proposed by Letterkenny Institute Of Technology Students' Union, St. Angela's College, Sligo Students' Union, Institute Of Technology, Sligo Students' Union.

Congress notes

That excessive alcohol consumption has increased substantially in the past number of years as a result of binge drinking.

Congress further notes

That underage alcohol consumption has increased and has a detrimental effect on the developing student, impacting their progress to third level.

Congress is saddened

That alcohol is responsible for 88 deaths every month in Ireland, over 1,000 deaths per year. There were 6,479 alcohol related deaths between 2008 and 2013, which accounts for 3.8% of all deaths in Ireland. Furthermore, One in four deaths of young men aged 15-39 in Ireland is due to alcohol. Liver disease rates are increasing rapidly in Ireland and the greatest level of increase is among 15-to-34-year-olds, who historically had the lowest rates of liver disease.

Congress believes:

That the issue of excessive alcohol consumption awareness can be targeted, research a possible partnership between USI, ISSU and the HSE.

Congress mandates the Vice President for Welfare, Vice President for Campaigns and the regional Vice Presidents:

To initiate contact with the HSE and ISSU to research the feasibility of a joint yearlong campaign on Excessive alcohol consumption awareness. This campaign would highlight the statistics and work with MO's to establish alcohol-free events. This campaign will have a particular focus on Fresher's, Raise and Give weeks and Christmas events. This campaign should be reviewed annually to ensure it meets the needs of the students.

WEL 19 – 8 Support for Students Addicted to Drugs and/or Alcohol

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

The lack of specialised supports and services for students undergoing drug and alcohol addiction.

Congress mandates

The VP for Welfare to seek partnership with a specialised drug and alcohol addiction service to facilitate a Drug & Alcohol Addiction awareness Roadshow.

WEL 19 – 9 Second-hand Smoke

Proposed By Dublin City University SU

Congress notes:

The danger and damaging effects second-hand smoke can have on students

Congress believes:

That college campuses should have smoke free zones.

Congress mandates:

The Welfare Officer to put together a campaign which will be rolled out to all college's to introduce smoke free zones.

WEL 19 – 10 Road Safety

Proposed By Institute Of Technology Tralee Students Union

Congress Notes

The importance of Road Safety and the Road Safety Authority, including but is not limited to rolling out road safety weeks on each MO's campus.

Congress Notes with Concern

That the Road Safety Authority do run campaigns in relation to vehicles of all types albeit more influence is placed on some more than others. Based on figures from the RSA January 2019 (the latest available at writing) from 2006-2015 on average per year 9 cyclists lose their life while 24 motorcyclists lose their lives. The RSA has information available on motorcyclists but unfortunately they don't provide information for other road users on how to look out for motorcyclists. The need for member organisations to highlight the importance of road safety irrespective of vehicle – that all vehicles are included in their road safety week, inclusive of cars, motorcycles, bicycles etc.

Congress Therefore Mandates

The VP Welfare and relevant Regional Officers to look into collaborating with organisations such as the Road Safety Authority in promoting Road Safety (irrespective of vehicle – that all vehicles are included in their road safety, inclusive of cars, motorcycles, bicycles etc.) inclusive of all with a particular emphasis on students.

WEL 19 – 11 USI Cost of Living Index

Proposed by Academic Affairs Working Group

Congress notes

That the DIT Cost of Living Guide (now the TU Dublin Cost of Living Guide) for 2018/19 indicates that the annual cost of college while living away from home is €11,829 and is €6,780 while living at home.

Congress further notes

That other colleges are attempting to put together similar guides or have lists of particular costs, include possible learning resources, in their marketing materials and websites.

Congress believes

That these guides do not necessarily portray the actual costs of living in Ireland while studying in third-level.

Congress mandates

That the USI President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Vice President for Welfare seek meaningful ways to explore the true costs of student life today in Ireland, including through the possible commission of research, taking into account regional pressures, soaring rents, and hidden course costs.

Congress further mandates

That any new Index should act as a national guide for student budgeting and be underpinned by evidence that can be utilised in USI's ongoing lobby efforts, including to inform the further development of the Grant Reform Paper and campaign for increased SUSI grants and other student supports.

WEL 19 – 12 Staff Training

Proposed By National College Of Art And Design Students' Union And Trinity College Dublin Students' Union

Congress notes:

That numerous students across Ireland face mental health issues, face sexuality and identity issues.

Congress further notes:

That academic staff may be the first person a student turns to with an issue relating to the aforementioned issues. Most, if not all, academic staff are inadequately trained in dealing with the aforementioned issues.

Congress mandates:

That the VP of Academic Affairs and VP for Welfare campaign for mandatory training for academic staff across the island to train them in the aforementioned issues.

WEL 19 – 13 Men's Mental Health

Proposed by Vice President for the Border, Midlands & West

Congress notes:

The importance of empowering men to speak about their Mental Wellbeing and to seek help if they face a crisis.

Congress notes with regret:

The lack of work in the area of Men's Mental Health within USI.

Congress notes with concern:

In 2017 Ireland registered almost 400 suicides with eight out of those ten fatalities accounting for males.

Congress recognises:

How the male population of students are vulnerable to mental health crisis and the stigma attached to seeking help.

Congress mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare to form a year round campaign specific to empowering men to speak about their Mental Health.

Congress further mandates:

The Vice President for Welfare & Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to coordinate an action to mark International Men's Day specific to Men's Health.

WEL 19 – 14 Adoption of the Consent Strategy

Proposed by VP Welfare

Congress Recognises

The unacceptable rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault in HEIs, as well as in wider society.

Congress Agrees

That sexual consent is paramount to positive communications and relationships.

Congress Welcomes

The lobby that USI has done to introduce an infrastructure for consent in HEIs, and the subsequent, Consent in HEIs report, "Safe, Respectful, Supportive & Positive: Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions"; of which USI were members of the inner working group writing the report.

Congress notes

That given the shifting culture, and external attitudes to consent, USI need to introduce a comprehensive strategy on how we can best support our students with these new structures.

Congress therefore mandates

The adoption of the 'Consent Strategy' Document

Congress further repeals

2018WEL16 Expert Consent Advisory Group

17WEL8 Consent classes

WEL 19 – 15 Casework Debriefing Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

Congress notes

The difficult casework which officers deal with on a regular basis; and often must rely on self-coping mechanisms between periods of little support.

Congress further notes

That although working groups or spaces at NC can be useful to debrief, an OB member may not be adequately equipped to lead a facilitation session to help officers explore issues they have faced in their roles.

Congress therefore mandates

The VP Welfare to organise debriefing sessions, on the request of Welfare working group, in order to best help officers to debrief on their heavy casework. Debriefing sessions should be lead by an appropriately skilled facilitator, and also encompass coping skills that officers can use in self-care exercises.

WEL 19 – 16 Regional Finance & Accommodation Information Provision

Proposed by Welfare Working Group

Congress notes

That the USI Finance & Accommodation guide is a useful tool for educating students on their accommodation rights, and how to manage their finances.

Congress also notes

That given the accommodation crises, it has become more difficult to categorise accommodation information as one piece, given that different areas are hard to compare.

Congress therefore mandates

That the VP Welfare would endeavour to provide the online version of the Finance & Accommodation guide which are more region specific.

WEL 19 – 17 Support for Students Addicted to Drugs and/or Alcohol

Proposed By Athlone IT SU

Congress notes

The lack of specialised supports and services for students undergoing drug and alcohol addiction.

Congress mandates

THE VP for Welfare to seek partnership with a specialised drug and alcohol addiction service to facilitate a Drug & Alcohol Addiction awareness Roadshow.

Administration and Finance

AF 19 – 1 Affiliation Fees Review

Proposed by USI President

Congress Notes

In 2018 Congress inherited the authority to decide affiliation fees from National Council after the successful passage of a constitutional amendment.

Congress further notes

The concern raised by member organisations regarding the cost of affiliation fees, in particular where affiliation fees are not collected as part of a levy separate to the Students' Union's own budget allocation.

Congress believes

That the current affiliation model requires review and reform. The current USI affiliation fee model has not changed, or increased, in 15 years.

Congress further believes

That Congress has a responsibility to act upon its inherited authority over affiliation fees in the interest of maintaining and growing a strong National Union and encouraging those who are currently non-members to join.

Congress therefore mandates

The USI President, in consultation with Member Organisation Presidents and Finance Committee, to conduct a comprehensive review of the current affiliation model and present its findings to Congress 2020, to include an impact and value assessment of any cap or change to the current model of affiliation fees.

Congress further mandates

That in the case that the aforementioned review procedure delivers a multitude of options of reform, that these options be put before Congress 2020 floor for debate.

AF 19 – 2 Cap on USI Affiliation Fees

Proposed By Dublin IT SU

Congress Notes:

Last year Congress passed a Constitutional Amendment to transfer democratic determination of affiliation fees from USI National Council to USI Congress.

Congress Regrets:

There are currently a number of Member Organisations who are frustrated at the amount of affiliation fees paid to USI and the support received in return. There is also concern on the over reliance of affiliation fees as the main source of income for USI.

Congress is Aware:

There are two big Institutions that are currently not members of USI, and USI haven't made any great effort to encourage either of them to join. It is believed that one of the many reasons for them not considering re-joining USI is due to the cost of affiliation fees.

Congress Supports:

A strong and well-structured national organisation which gains its strength from representing all students across the Republic of Ireland from all the affiliated colleges that see value and benefit in being affiliated to USI.

Congress therefore Mandates:

The USI President to implement a staggered reduction in USI affiliation fees from 1st July 2020, and a cap on membership affiliation fees effective from 1st July 2023, thereby ensuring that no member organisation pays more than €70,000 annually in affiliation fees.

Constitutional Amendments

Constitutional amendments require a vote of 2/3 of those registered for Congress and voting to pass into the constitution.

CA 19 - 1 The Creation of a Full time PG Affairs Officer.

Proposed By The Vice President For Postgraduate Affairs.

From Article 5.12.1 Remove "in a part time capacity" and replace with the following:

5.12 The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

5.12.1 The Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the VP/ Postgraduate) shall have responsibility, in a part-time capacity on the Unions Officer Board, for the Union's work on policy and engagement with postgraduate students.

5.12.2 The VP/Postgraduate shall assist the VP/Campaigns with campaigns in relation to postgraduate issues.

5.12.3 The VP/Postgraduate shall be Chairperson of the Postgraduate Affairs Committee.

CA 19 – 2 Officerboard Term Limits

Proposed By Trinity College Dublin SU

Delete:

5.12.1 No member of the Officer Board may serve a cumulative total of more than three years on the Officer Board. With the exception of the VP/Irish, who shall be unpaid, the other members of Officer Board shall be paid a salary decided by Finance Committee. Their term shall be from the 1st July until the following 30th of June.

Replace with:

5.12.1 No member of the Officer Board may serve a cumulative total of more than two years on the Officer Board. Members of Officer Board shall be paid a salary decided by Finance Committee. Their term shall be from the 1st of July until the following 30th of June.

CA 19 – 3 USI National Executive

Proposed by USI President

With immediate effect, remove all references to:

"The Officer Board"

And replace with:

"The Executive Team"

CA 19 – 4 Special Focus on Higher Education

Proposed by Presidents' Working Group

With immediate effect, insert the following text under Article 5, section 3:

5.3.9

The USI President shall work with a special focus on matters relating to higher education, and ensure the overall objectives and mission of USI Officer Board are in line with this.

CA 19 – 5 Campaigns Strategy Committee

Proposed by the Vice President for Campaigns

Insert at Article 7: Committees and Advisory Panels

Amend the word 'ten' committees to 'thirteen' in 7.1.1 and 7.1.2.

Add '13. Campaigns Strategy Committee' at 7.1.2.13

Add the following at 7.1.6 -

7.1.6 The Campaigns Strategy Committee.

The Vice President for Campaigns is to be the chair of the subcommittee.

The subcommittees function is to provide strategic leadership in the development, implementation and sustainability of year long campaigns within USI.

The campaigns to be worked on by the campaigns subcommittee are to be voted upon at the first National Council each year.

The strategies created by the subcommittee are to be drafted by the Vice President for Campaigns, and should be presented to National Council to vote upon.

The meetings of the subcommittee should take place at least quarterly, but as often as necessary determined by the chair. These dates should be set out in the USI calendar of events at the beginning of the year.

USI Officer Board Annual Reports 2019

President / Uachtarán

Síona Cahill

I hope I have done all of you proud in the position as the student movement of Ireland's chief spokesperson and representative voice. I have worked hard at USI level for the last three years, and I have loved (pretty much) every minute of it. This is an incredible and challenging job, and to be honest it has been both a pleasure and a privilege to give it my all.

I have sought to cover as much ground as possible within my capacity as President matters from Climate change (addressing conferences and rallying at protests) to Mental Health (I was listed as No. 1 on the Hotpress special edition on '100 voices: Now we're talking'), and have more than doubled our media engagement.

I have sought to ensure that USI and the student movement is effectively represented by myself or our USI team across areas that affect students, and in that, we have had an outstanding year. I would like to thank all of the team for their commitment, creativity, and energy.

They gave a sh*t about students and making access to education, and your success while in the system, a priority.

Higher Education Funding

From the outset it was clear that there would likely be no immediate wins when it came to a decision flowing from the 2016 Cassells report - there is a poverty of ambition in the approach to a sustainable funding model, one that will be needed post Brexit more than ever. This was frustrating, but it only made us work harder to keep the issue of funding alive and on the agenda.

As I took over this position in July, we heard that Cassells had been sent for review 'to Europe', so we immediately set about building on the work of previous teams and continuing the lobby efforts at all levels and in every space we occupied. Ireland has the second highest fees in Europe at €3,000 a year, coupled with the spiralling costs of accommodation across all urban centres.

After Brexit, we will be the highest fees for students accessing third level in Europe. Meanwhile, student grants have not been increased at all since 2012, which means they are nowhere near in line with the cost of living for struggling and particularly disadvantaged students - it is a disgrace, and it makes education elitist and inaccessible for so many. The sector has faced a managed decline in state investment over time while the number of students

in the system increased due to a demographic bulge. Our lecturers and Institutional staff have done a noteworthy job of maintaining standards while our staff:student ratio has been driven up, resources have dipped, and they are living on increasingly precarious contracts of employment.

Over the summer, I built new relationships with THEA (Technological Higher Education Association) and the IUA (Irish Universities Association) in developing a joint approach to tackling Government pre-budget on the funding issue for Higher Education. In September we launched a statement along with IFUT and THEA ahead of Budget 2019.

I met with both Minister McHugh and Mitchell O'Connor in November, which was the first time a Minister for Education has agreed to meet the USI President formally in over 2 years. It was confirmed that USI was the primary and main contact for all discussions relating to Higher Education when it came to student representation, and we secured a further meeting with the Minister before the close of my term. The Minister (McHugh) was particularly concerned and interested in relation to the topic of teacher supply, which we related to the cost of the Gaeltacht grant and I strongly believe our work will produce supports by the next budget.

After the budget and at the request of National Council, The Coalition for Publicly funded education which had been meeting continuously (comprising of USI, ISSU, SIPTU, Forsa, IFUT and the TUI) began organising a joint student and staff action for March 21st, 2019 which has been heard loud and clear called #FundTheFuture.

SU presidents from across Ireland North and South signed a public statement on the matter in advance, and students came out in huge numbers across the country in a visible protest at the lack of progress. Strategically, this will work I believe in our favour, as it is from here on in that Departments will be looking at Budget 2020. I have been in constant contact with officials and both Ministers for Education and have a strong rapport with both which I have used to further the case for Higher Education funding at every opportunity.

Separately, after significant lobbying, USI welcomed €1 million additional funding to the Student Assistance Fund, ring-fenced to assist PME students.

Student Accommodation

Undoubtedly, access to affordable accommodation for students is one of the key and growing issues for the student movement. The student accommodation crisis is one that feeds into a wider societal housing crisis, and it was imperative that we acted - which we most certainly did. 6,000 students took to the streets of Dublin on October 3rd, and I addressed a crowd of well over 12,000 in a public rally at Leinster House. We did not, as a national council, cancel a protest on education fees or funding in favour of one on housing. What we did rather, was recognise the overwhelming moral imperative to respond to the greatest crisis of our generation, and a crisis which not only affects students, but is tangibly a barrier to access and success in education. If we were to delete our student fees in the morning, there would still be

students who cannot access our education system due to the lack of housing and affordable accommodation, and we weren't going to stand for that.

Our lobbying has worked and Government are proposing legislation for rent caps to cover PBSA, and for extended tenancy rights to be given to students with access to the RTB. We will aggressively pursue this until it is reality.

Consent

My presidency of USI platformed consent education on our third level campuses, and we have been heard. Students' Unions around Ireland have for years driven the call for consent to be highlighted for students - running consent classes, making it a central part of USI Sexual Health and Guidance (SHAG) campaigns, and training to be ambassadors or working on bystander initiatives - but institutionally, so much more needs to be committed to across the board.

In the wake of more and more student cases being highlighted through media, I was interviewed in studio on RTE 6.1 regarding USI's views and reaction on consent. I used the opportunity to outline the meaning of consent in particular (OMFG: Ongoing, Mutual, Freely Given), and to call for consent education at third level to be mainstreamed. In October, I addressed the Oireachtas Education and Skills Committee on the matter.

The Minister was forced by growing pressure to organise a conference in Dublin Castle on the matter with senior management of institutions, and thereafter convened an expert working group which myself and the VP Welfare were leading roles. Significant effort was put in, and a report will be published in April 2019 with key recommendations for institutions around the provision of consent education, cultural change, support available, and reporting mechanisms.

I have done a significant amount of media and engaged with Government and numerous advocacy groups on the issues facing students and young people regarding consent, as well as publicly challenging cultural norms. USI's work in this area is valued and recognised.

International Work

After the repeal of the eighth amendment, international organisations and groups have sought our input and advice on the work of the student movement in Ireland in campaigning. In July, I addressed 3,000 youth activists of Planned Parenthood in Detroit, thereafter meeting with elected representatives and staffers in the US Houses of Congress in DC ahead of the Kavanaugh Supreme court nomination debacle. In October, I addressed the German Green party conference of over 1,000 as keynote speaker. It is important that the work we put in a student movement is remembered and recognised at home and abroad.

New Staff

I have forged a relationship with SUAS educational development for a new staff role starting in 2019 to engage on sustainable development goals with students across campuses. We also welcomed Aoife Duff as our Public Relations and Media Manager in late September,

and she has been a fantastic addition to the team.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Leas-Uachtarán do Chúrsaí Acadúla

Oisín Hassan

My two terms as your Vice President for Academic Affairs, and my time this year as USI Deputy, have been a great honour. My work has focused on changing the attitudes of those in positions of authority to student representation and partnership across third-level. I couldn't have done that without our membership. Thank you for your support. Good luck to the next VPAA!

Deputy President

As Deputy I support the work of the President and OB. This involves office management, administration, and HR. I've also prepare National Council documentation. The Deputy also works on the Student Achievement Awards (SAAI). I've worked on nominations and the awards process alongside the LUDG.

National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)

The VPAA represents USI on the partners Group (includes QQI and HEA) and supports the NStEP Coordinator day-to-day. We've rolled out another year of training, across 23 institutions. I acted as a Trainer at the sparqs Scotland 'train the trainer' We held a Network meeting on digital engagement. Thank you to the VP BMW for his support. Another Network is planned for May.

NStEP underwent an evaluation after I lobbied for more funding. I worked with the external consultant to deliver that evaluation. From there we agreed a contract extension for the Coordinator and that a new Manager would be recruited. We organised an NStEP Conference. A Strategy consultation has been launched from which NStEP will have access to more funding to deliver an ambitious Plan to 2021.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The Student Centred Approaches Conference that I co-organised with the QQI and others in Dublin Castle was a huge step for student partnership in Ireland. 220+ attended and students were involved throughout.

I developed a series of seven 'Academic Representation Insights' to strengthen the role of Class Reps. We also supported the DkITSU/DkIT proposal for funding to develop Class Rep accreditation.

I proposed that the National Forum should employ student interns to strengthen student partnership with USI. To date 3 Student Associate Interns have worked on student consultation, success, and digital skills. Another 3 will be employed by April.

Guidelines for engaging with the ISSE survey have been agreed.

National Student Partnership Agreement

Discussion with the Department for Education and Skills

has been ongoing. I submitted a detailed proposal to strengthen USI and student engagement with them. The Dept are very open to a formalised relationship. Strategic Dialogues have now begun with the hope that agreement can be reached in Semester 1 next year. A core part of this agreement remains a Framework to support Students' Unions autonomy.

Further Education and Training

Building on the FET Strategy I developed we've fostered relationships with SOLAS and ETBI. Proposals have been discussed. I am hopeful we can agree a programme of work to support student representation.

Education Campaigns

The traditional Exam Success campaign was rolled into the new Re:Charge mental health campaign, with thanks to the VP Welfare and VP Campaigns.

Class Rep Campaign

A new national Class Rep recruitment campaign ('Become a Rep') was developed. I created a new 'representation' webpage and map, and circulated a resource pack to MOs.

The Marketisation of Education

Myself and the VP South reached out to a senior academic to chair a working group on this matter, but to date we have had no response. I'm a member of the European Students' Union Commodification Taskforce and hope to use the definition and report we are developing in Ireland. I have also used speeches and panel discussions to highlight the ills of marketisation, and for the need to ensure Ireland does not follow the UK's example.

Access and Retention

The concept of 'Student Success' arose from the National Access Plan and I've secured 'Student Success' as a central strategic pillar of the National Forum to 2021. An upcoming HEA event will focus on USI's dropout research. I also co-organised a Student Success Seminar with MSU and Maynooth University.

Academic Policy Development

I've submitted USI responses on Career Guidance (DES), Research Training (DBEI), Blended Learning (QQI), and Assessment (QQI). I also developed USI's response to the National Forum Strategic Plan and to the Department's Statement of Strategy.

National Affairs

I developed a detailed Technological Universities SU Mergers paper to support merging MOs. This included toolkits. I have been working with THEA (Technological HE Association) to engage college Presidents, and to work towards a collaborative day with SUs.

I am working towards another USI Budget Submission and Lobby day of TDs and Senators.

The VPAA now sits on IUA policy groups on part-time students and staff digital skills.

NUS-USI

I have been engaging within the NUS-USI membership on a possible role for NStEP in the North.

Working with NUS-USI to lobby on Brexit to MEPs, the European Commission, to Government, and TDs we have maintained a strong focus on our Northern and border members in our efforts.

Postgraduate Affairs

I was proud to coordinate the Pharmacy Masters campaign, writing the report from a survey of 4th years, and planning a day of action including a media launch attended by 150 and a rally of 500. Unpaid placement was defeated but work is ongoing to reduce fees and gain SUSI access. The campaign is a credit to the pharmacy students themselves. Working with the VPPGA and LUDG we continue to build political support for fee regulations.

International Students

I've worked on the QQI International Education Mark Advisory Group to ensure the Mark can act as a charter to enhance the rights of international students. It will be accompanied by best practice guidance.

International Affairs

The VPAA represents USI to the European Students' Union and works on international policy. This involves two Conventions looking at themes and two Board Meetings where decisions are made (like Congress). We also engage with ESUs work throughout the year, including on the social dimension (access) and European Parliament campaigns/lobbying.

I have also been lobbying the Department here to be active in the Bologna Process.

Vice President for Welfare

Leas-Uachtarán do Leas

Damien McClean

I have been honoured to represent the students of USI this year. Any issue preventing a student from continuing or accessing education is a student issue. I have worked with officers from all of our member organisations, and represented you at a national level so that students' unions can be in a position to support your students' education, as best as possible. These are a summary of some of the work I have done this year.

Sexual Health

I wanted to ensure we were being smarter about our outreach campaigns. I worked with the Central Statistics Office to gather stats covering STI rates amongst different demographics. I was able to identify patterns of when there are spikes in report rates (using a few plot functions in R, if anyone is mathematically inclined!). Then, we were able to run preventative campaigns to combat the spikes.

We ran campaigns in October, Introduction to sexual health, for first years new to college, and sexual health

information. We also ran a Christmas campaign to raise awareness around increased nights out (and to prevent a spike that had occurred in previous years around January). We have plans to organise an online campaign to be promoted around festival times in the summer.

We ran a national roadshow in February in the run up to Valentine's Day. We partnered with several organisations, and included a wider range of topics than we had covered before. We partnered with the HSE, HIV Ireland, AIDSWest and Gay Men's Health Clinic to promote protection from STIs. We partnered with the Irish Family Planning Association and MyOptions to promote unplanned pregnancy information and legal abortion services (for the first time ever), and we partnered with the National Women's Council, SmartConsent and Rape Crisis Centres to promote consent and ending sexual harassment & assault. We secured funding for 30,000 SHAG packs (10,000 more than last year), and were able to expand our roadshow to deliver consent workshops on different campuses, and worked with the ItStopsNow campaign to put murals up in different colleges.

In addition to promoting outreach messages on a national level, I was able to work with the HSE and CSO to identify regional issues. When STI outbreaks were identified in certain regions, I lobbied to get more supplies sent to those regions to help curb the outbreaks.

I was able to work with Officer Board to lobby for reforms in sex education. We wrote submissions for government panels and spoke on behalf of students at rallies, on what reform we saw that our students needed for a reformed relationships and sexual education program. We were members of a coalition of various NGOs to co-author a joint submission.

Mental Health

We wanted to change our mental health campaign to be more inclusive, and to be more engaging to students. We partnered with the HSE to develop the 'Re:Charge' campaign. We wanted a campaign that could engage students at any level, whether you're accessing supports, or looking after your mental wellbeing through self-care. We developed the campaign to encourage students to take preventative measures and incremental steps to look after their health. We worked with psychologists to secure our messaging, and worked towards messaging that would be inclusive of all our students. Through our lobbying efforts, we were able to quadruple our funding for mental health campaigns

We launched the national roadshow campaign with the Minister with special responsibility for mental health, Jim Daly and executives in the HSE. We delivered a new range of materials to campuses, and visited colleges across the country. We went from Cork to Letterkenny back to Tralee in one week so we were like yo-yos up and down the country so we were. In addition to the launch of Re:Charge, we launched our new app, 'Positive Connections', where we list welfare supports in each college, along with contact details and maps to access them.

Similar to our efforts to expand our campaigns into

times when they're most needed, we commissioned and released a video on World Mental Health day, and we developed ReCharge materials to link in with exam destress campaigns during the Christmas period. We have been planning another activation of the campaign for the upcoming exam period. The campaign has been well received internationally, having been presented at the European Students' Union gathering. Other countries are seeking to roll out this campaign in their own countries. To guide our future campaigns, we will be launching the results of our mental health survey after congress.

In addition to outreach campaigns, we have been working with Mental Health reform and other bodies to lobby for better mental health supports. We lobbied for additional funding for mental health services, and the annual budget increased spending on mental health supports by an additional €84 million. We have also been appointed to the HEA working group for the Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention strategy. We have been fighting for student supports to be central to their initiatives.

Accommodation

I worked to develop a more updated finance and accommodation guide this year, to provide more suited information. In addition to the guide, we developed partnerships with Threshold to provide a confidential hotline to students to ask about their rights with their tenancy. We also developed a hotline for union officers to support them in casework relating to accommodation rights. They were split by region, so each area could have information tailored to their students.

In the midst of the housing crisis, we continue to lobby relevant departments in the government, and the HEA to provide affordable purpose-built student accommodation. To aid our future lobbying efforts, we will use the information gathered from our national student housing survey.

Consent

From early in the year, we have been lobbying for the implementation of a framework for colleges to follow to promote consent education, internal support structures and policy changes to promote positive sexual communication, and prevent sexual harassment and assault. We've been at the forefront of promoting consent this year. We presented at a town hall meeting of senior members of college management and students' unions. We've had one on one meetings with government officials on these issues, and we were invited to present to the Oireachtas committee on Education & Skills. Through our work, we were able to secure our spot as inner working group members, formed to develop a comprehensive framework for HEIs to follow.

We are fighting for not just consent workshops in all colleges, but year long education initiatives. We have advocated for clear, accessible reporting structures to be set up, and policies to be introduced in each college to ensure students are given the support they need if they are a victim of sexual misconduct.

We've included messaging on consent and ending sexual harassment into our SHAG campaigns. We've worked

with the National Women's Council to help form the ItStopsNow. campaign. We've also developed strong ties with experts nationwide. We have been able to work with the Bystander Program (developed by Louise Crowley), the SmartConsent program (developed by Padraig McNeela and Siobhan Higgins), and allies in Northern Ireland and the UK (to help us learn about their reporting structures).

Students are at the forefront of consent education. We had the largest delegation at the Ending Sexual Harassment Project (ESHTE) conference, and had many speakers and strong engagement in the conference.. We have been contributing to the reformation of Sexual Assault Treatment Units (SATUs) this year and working with the Gardaí and Department of Justice. We were featured in the SafeWorld summit speakers to talk about the importance of consent. In the second semester, the Danish National Students' Union organised a study trip to us, to learn how we achieved success in our lobbying efforts and we are currently working on partnerships to conduct a nationwide survey of students' experiences on sexual consent.

Addictive Behaviours

We worked with the HSE and Ana Liffey Drug Project to develop a campaign for harm reducing strategies for those using drugs. We worked with the HSE to coordinate when we could best launch information messages, and we held the campaign during relevant times, in conjunction with large student social events.

In addition to their own campaigns, we ensured that addictive behaviours were included into our other campaigns. We worked to include messages of addictive behaviours and substance abuse (such as heavy alcohol drinking) into our SHAG and Mental health campaigns. We recognise that no student issue happens in isolation, and it's important that our campaigns are interlinked, to reflect how students will be interacting with these issues.

We have been lobbying heavily with the Ana Liffey Drug Project to introduce legislation to decriminalise the usage of some substances. We will be co-promoting a campaign to inform the public on the need for a health-based model to treating substance abuse. We have also lobbied the department of health for better supports for those suffering with alcohol addiction.

Physical Health

We launched a roadshow promoting free subscriptions to VideoDoc, a free online doctor service, for USI members. We visited various campuses, along with working with the HSE and Department of Health to development policy on online health services. We have continued to lobby those departments to provide protections for current on-campus health centres. We have worked with the Irish Student Health Association and Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland to this end.

We've developed body confidence messaging into our SHAG week. We've worked with BodyWhys and SpunOut to inform our campaigns for body confidence. Working with them, we have represented students to various health promoting boards, such as Student Sport Ireland, Healthy

Ireland and Student Affairs Ireland.

Vice President for Campaigns

Leas-Uachtarán um Feachtais

Michelle Byrne

Thank you to everyone who engaged with the campaigns we rolled out so far this year. The campaigns are everything with the power of students behind them. I feel immensely proud and privileged to have been representing and working for you for the last two years.

Higher Education Funding

Lobby day: The day was a massive success with many students attending a record breaking amount of 130 TDs & Senators attending which was co-organised with the VP AA. Many TDs afterwards asked questions in the Dáil chamber on some of the key issues that students raised.

Budget 2019 campaign: we drafted our pre-budget submission and lobbied in advance which some of the core asks being around reducing fees and increasing grants.

Rainy Day Action: We hosted staged an action outside the Dáil on the morning of the budget with umbrellas, highlighting that creating a rainy day fund is mad when the education system is crumbling around us from under investment. We got a significant amount of media around this.

#EducationIs Activism & Engagement toolkit: created a resource file for MOs to assist in creating activist groups and other tools to enable SUs to inform students about higher education funding issue.

Student Teachers' Campaign #GaelFees: Highlighted the extra costs faced by teachers with the LU don Ghaelige and held a protest outside the Dáil with 'All I Want for Christmas is the Gaeltacht Fees covered' being the main message.

Pharmacy Students Campaign: Organised a launch of a report & protest against the new ban on paid placement and integrated masters costs with the VP AA. We got a lot of media on this and featured on the RTE news!

Coalition for Publicly Funded Education: worked with the coalition on progressing the campaign which most recently led to the #FundTheFuture Campaign.

Fund The Future Campaign: Developing on from #EducationIs branding, the new campaign brand encompasses the main messages we wanted to convey around core funding, grants and fees. We made videos for walkout, gathering comparative information locally, comparison of past/other countries, targeted SU elections & local elections, class shout outs, photo calls with potential SU candidates, briefings, class rep council information game, created FundTheFuture campaign pack with new logo, graphic and resources and more! We got a lot of media on the day and ended up on the RTE news again!

Accommodation

Homes For Study: We launched our accommodation survey, did a digital day of action and gathered media stories from students to help shape the discourse around housing in relation to students. We launched a Dublin bus and Hotpress ad campaign and promoted digs for students. Free Forbidden Fruit ticket up for grabs if you fill it in [research.usi.ie].

Raise The Roof - Student Lockout: On Oct 3rd 6,000 students out on the streets taking up half the protest of 12,000 people. We dominated the media around the march and got our message heard. We also had the huge success of the motion we, the Coalition, brought to the Dáil passed. There has been resounding compliments from the Coalition and members of the public in relation to the protest as to how visible students were.

#HomesForAll Dec 1st protest: 15,000 attended the Dec 1st Demonstration organised by the Housing & Homeless Coalition of which we're members. I addressed the crowd the event. I also recorded a podcast with 'Reboot Republic' ahead of it to promote the day.

Housing Protest April 6th: I led one arm of the 3 start locations which mobilised thousands again on housing starting at the Housing Agency across from USI HQ and leading to a three large crowds meeting, a banner drop and flares.

Other housing protests: End Evictions bill protest & spoke at launch, 'No to IRES & Corporate landlords' protest, Take Back the City Banner drop in aid of the 16 days of Action to support women affected by domestic violence tied into the housing theme of which I addressed the crowd at the event.

Representations in Leinster House: I presented to Joint Oireachtas Committee for Housing, Planning and Local Government on the Residential Tenancies Bill (Students rents, rights and protections) bill 2018 in November which received media attention of which made the news. I addressed the committee again on two bills, the Anti Eviction Bill 2018 and Residential Tenancies Bill 2018 amendments in February.

End Youth Homelessness policy and launch: I was involved in drafting the policy document for the coalition and the launch of the paper.

Other Campaigns

- #Time4Equality - International Women's Day Walkout.
- Hospitality Workers' Rights - survey targeting students who work in the hospitality sector around hours and pay conditions focussing on tipping.
- Workers rights with SIPTU.
- Postgrad campaign on pay and living conditions.
- Big Start - Early Educators campaign.
- Sustainability campaigns & environmental protests - Climate Action Now, Waste reduction bill protest, School Students Strike for Climate, Rise Up for Climate lobby day, Climate Case court case and more!

- Solidarity with the North for reproductive rights, trans pride and marriage equality.
- Voter Registration drive - Get Reg*d.
- Shake the Seanad campaign.
- Local/EU elections campaign.
- #RestoreTheYouthSafetyNet campaign for social welfare for under 26 year olds.
- Sex Ed Bill protest.
- LGBTQI+ Prides around the island.
- 16 days of action - action against domestic violence towards women.
- It Stops Now Campaign murals on campuses.
- Drug harm reduction campaign with HSE 'Safer Student Nights', #SaferFromHarm drug decriminalization and Students for Sensible Drugs Policy (SSDP) conference.
- 'Still Waiting' Health Campaign.
- Road Safety campaign.
- World Mental Health Day campaign.
- Re:Charge mental health & exam de-stress campaign and +Connections app.
- Online SHAG campaign in semester 1 and SHAG roadshow in semester 2.
- 'What did you get for Christmas' STI campaign.
- Problem Gambling campaign.
- Stand With Nurses and Midwives.
- ISSE Student survey communications.
- Direct Provision Think-in.
- NUS-USI Affiliation campaign with UUSU.
- TUDSU referendum.
- DITSU Save Our Services campaign.
- DkITSU Constitutional referendum.
- Anti eviction solidarity campaign in Waterford.
- South East Cardiac care campaign.

Union Development

Partnership building: I started off my role as VP Campaigns with meeting a number of Unions in order to build relationships and develop campaigns for the year ahead, including

Coalition for Publicly Funded Education, ICTU, INMO, SIPTU, NNHC, CEYH, IPU, Threshold, Problem Gambling Ireland, HSE, Ana Liffey Drug Project, Video Doc, EU Commission, Still Waiting Health campaign group, Uplift and activist groups.

International work: Presented to an activist summer camp in Denmark, liaised with the National Palestinian students'

union and hosted workshop for DSF Danish Students' Union officer training.

Training/Workshops: facilitated, drafted and prepared workshops and trainings for SUT, SUT+ and Part-time Officer Training on everything from Commercial Activity, Education Campaigns, Welfare campaigns session, Accommodation campaign and local events/campaigns planning. Also organised Non-violent direct action training for SU officers.

Participated in Pink Training, Rise: All Ireland Student Activist Network, Women Lead.

Panels: Spoke on panels at Emerging Ireland: Festival of Progressive Politics, Marxism Festival and Students for Sensible Drug Policy Conference.

Working groups/committees: Hosted the Campaigns, Union Development and Ents, Marketing & Commercial working groups throughout the year and involved in the TU Merger working group.

Governance: Elected to National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) board of directors,

Problem Gambling Ireland board of directors and Uplift Housing expert advisory panel.

Campaigns Subcommittee: I want to thank all of the sabbatical officers elected to the committee so much for their continually work this year, of which I chaired. They truly helped shaped the strategies of our largest campaigns and made them as successful as they were. Thank you.

Vice President for the Border, Midlands and Western Region

Leas-Uachtarán don Iarthar, Lár-tíre agus Teorainn

Barry Clohessy

What a fast but rewarding year it has been working as the Vice President for the Border Midlands & West. Not only have I supported Unions with their work this year, but I am very grateful for the support that Unions in the region have given me during my term. Thank you so much for the experience.

I would like to wish my successor and the newly elected students' unions officers the very best of luck for the year ahead.

MO Engagement

As the Vice President for the Border Midlands & West I spent a significant amount of my time either sitting on a bus, a train or behind the wheel of my car (yes, I do have a car) traveling from USI Headquarters to Member Organisations communicating with and updating SU

Officers and students.

We started of the year as the best region would do, with regional bonding, we got down a dirty (literally covered in mud) and this created great working and personal relationships with from the offset. Post SUT I travelled

to each Students' Union to introduce myself, meet the teams, go through my plans, and the plans of the Union for the year ahead. I have made myself available as much as possible during the year to Unions for team meetings, councils, events and general days where Unions might have just needed some help in the Office.

National Campaigns

As a member of the Officer Board, I was also a member of the Campaigns Sub Committee. It was a pleasure to work with the elected members of National Council and the Officer Board on the Student Lockout Campaign, Gaeltacht Fees Campaign and the campaign for Publicly Funded Education, Fund the Future.

While being part of the development of these campaigns was fantastic, I thoroughly enjoyed my time traveling campus to campus addressing class reps, classes and getting to talk to students on the ground about each campaign.

Trainings

From the beginning of the year I worked closely with members of Officer Board and Staff of USI to organise and deliver a range of trainings. This included, assisting to facilitate sessions at SUT in Athlone IT and SUT+ in Ulster University, creating a new type of Part Time Officer Training which was delivered locally to NUI Galway Students' Union, GMIT Students' Union, StACS Students' Union & IT Sligo Students' Union, presenting to Class Rep Training Events, supporting trainings such a Pink Training and attending trainings such Mental Health First Aid Training and Media Training.

Union Development

This year I had the pleasure of working alongside Dundalk IT Students' Union to draft their new constitution, which would see the union with a new structure including the introduction of an additional full time sabbatical officer, six part time officers and a finance committee.

This was a huge task to complete in the time-frame that we had, but I am delighted to say that the New Constitution for Dundalk IT Students' Union went to referendum March 12th and successfully passed with 91.5% of the vote. The Union has now elected their New Executive team and I look forward to seeing the Union going from strength to strength during the next academic year.

I am also delighted to say that I am involved with the Students' Union Working Group of the TU Merger group the Connacht Ulster Alliance with IT Sligo Students' Union, Letterkenny IT Students' Union and Galway-Mayo IT Students' Union.

Energy & Sustainability

With NUI Galway and Maynooth University being partnered with the Student Switch Off Campaign I worked closely with the USI Energy and Sustainability Manager to roll the campaign out on both campuses, with the aim of encouraging students to switch off and reduce energy wastage.

I also worked closely with the Energy and Sustainability Manager on Sustainability in Students' Unions and educating students about sustainability in everyday life. We worked with a number of Students' Unions on sustainability audits and becoming a Fairtrade Union and College. I brush my teeth with a bamboo toothbrush and shop with a tote bag now, it's the little things that count.

Additional Campaigns, Representation and Duties

I worked alongside the Vice President for Welfare to roll out Welfare Campaigns such as SHAG Week in IT Sligo Students' Union and the Re:Charge Campaign in Letterkenny IT Students' Union and Dundalk IT Students' Union

The annual Voter Registration Campaign proved difficult this academic year particularly after the tremendous work carried out by Unions and Officer Board in the run up to the Repeal Referendum. This year we could see the knock on effects of this Voter Registrations drive but number should rise again in the near future. Keep up the great work.

After the annual USI Lobby Day, and before Budget 2019, I followed up with every TD and Senator who attended the day with points from the discussion they had with Officer Board and Students' Union Officers.

I was delighted to work as a support to the Vice President for Academic Affairs on the National Student Engagement Programme this year by attending partner meetings and hosting a Network Meeting in DCU.

I represented USI at number of times externally this year, including; Galway, Cork and Dublin Pride Festival, Student Housing Demo in Galway, and the One Galway Committee.

Events

The USI President delegated the National Mature Student Gathering to myself and the Vice President for the Dublin Region. The event was held in Trinity College Dublin and was very successful with almost 40 mature students from across the country attending. The day featured sessions from Public Speaking to Preparing for life after college with a panel discussion hosted by RTÉ's Aengus Mac Grianaí.

I have also been delegated by the USI President the event aspect of the National Student Achievement Awards Ireland which takes place on April 18th. I was delighted to secure the amazing Dublin City Hall for the event.

Thank you very much Congress!

Vice President for the Southern Region

Leas-Uachtarán don Deisceart

Lorna Fitzpatrick

Below is a short insight into the work I have undertaken this year as Vice President for the Southern Region. I want to thank all the students and officers in the Southern Region for their support so far this year and I look forward

to the last few months.

Communication

This year, I have done my utmost to communicate with my region in the way that best suited the individual. I have used different platforms to communicate with students and Officers within the region and have had regular meetings on campuses with the Officers on campuses to learn about local issues and share information. I have shared information from OB with MO's and vice versa such as important dates, upcoming events and gathering feedback. I have also prepared a USI update for local Council meetings to keep Class Reps up to date on the work of their National Union.

Support & Development

At the beginning of my term, I met with each team to discuss and record their plan of work for the year so I would be able to best support them with their plan for the year. I gathered copies of constitutions, policies and procedures that were shared with Officers who needed them. Throughout the year, I had constant communication with the teams in my region to ensure I was aware of new issues so I could support them move past them but also to keep up to date with all of their achievements.

I updated the campaigns and events directory that was circulated to all Officers before the second National Council meeting.

USI Campaigns

I focused on supporting my MO's in the lead up to the National Campaigns by providing all relevant information to Officers as soon as possible. I developed plans to support MO's to rally students to attend and participate in these campaigns such as social media plans, ticket templates, class addresses schedules, email templates etc. After each campaign, I gathered feedback from the MO's in my region to ensure we had critical information from each MO to help us improve going forward.

Local Campaigns

I supported MO's in running local campaigns on the ground and through sharing information through social media. I have helped the teams with developing campaigns and where possible, link our national campaign to the local campaign. At Council updates, I tried to congratulate the team on campaigns they ran since my last update and have gathered information about each MO's campaigns that can be shared with other MO's and on an international level to help with knowledge sharing.

Voter Registration

I provided support and guidance to MO's at the beginning of the academic year to run voter registration drives for both the register of electors and the seanad electoral register. I have also offered to provide further support to MO's to run additional voter registration drives in the lead up to the European and Local Elections.

Lobbying

I supported MO's in connecting with local representatives through gathering and sharing all contact information for Councillors, TD's and Senators for each MO. I tried to make sure that MO's fully understood the Pre-Budget submission and helped to link the overall ask to the local situation. I followed up with every TD and Senator that attended the USI lobby day which resulted in a number of follow up calls, emails and PQ's on the topics contained within our submission.

USI Awareness

I attended Council meetings in every MO to update them on the work of USI and I also provided a written report that could be circulated to all reps. I used social media accounts to share information about the work of USI and have worked with local and student media to promote USI campaigns, initiatives and updates. Many of the MO's in the region used USI branding on jackets, posters, event pages etc. which helps build brand awareness. I also included all USI social media details in presentations I made such as the Elections Training and updates for Council.

Class Rep & PTO Training

At the beginning of the year, I gathered dates for all training to ensure I could present to Class Reps about their National Union and the work that happens on a National Level. The VP's for the Regions met to discuss the plan for this years trainings based on feedback from last year. I developed a new presentation for this years trainings which was circulated with the other VP's for the Regions. I gathered feedback from each of the training events which can be used to further improve next year.

Technological Universities

I have had regular meetings with MO's engaged in the process of TU Mergers within the Region to access the situation, gain an understanding of developments and concerns in relation to the mergers. I have passed on information gathered about the situation in each MO to the President to allow for further communication with Ministers, HEA and others. I have encouraged each MO involved in mergers to meet and openly discuss the process and where necessary, bring in external facilitators for this to take place.

USI Representation & Engagement with ESU

This year, I supported the VP AA with USI International Affairs. I carried out all administrative functions for these events including the application process, registration process and compiling all documentation for our delegation to access in advance of the events. I took the lead in becoming a member of the Mental Health Working Group and being successfully appointed to the Women's Representation Taskforce. We are developing a website to keep members up to date on the work undertaken by USI at ESU events and by ESU as an organisation.

FE engagement

I made contact with FE colleges in the Region to continue communication and to develop a relationship between

the Students' Union and USI. I put together a document to support Students' Unions in developing to become functioning Students' Unions. This has been circulated with all VP's for the Regions to support them in this area too.

Vice President for the Dublin Region

Leas-Uachtarán do Átha Cliath

Colm O'Halloran

This is the second year of a full time Dublin Regional Officer and it has been a pleasure and a challenge. Throughout the year, I have been a support to MOs, an international man of mystery speaking to NSO in Norway, an activist fighting fighting for student accommodation and a friend to SU Officers. A breakdown of the years activities can be found below.

MO Engagement

Throughout the year, I have been the link between USI Officer Board and the Dublin Region MOs and a support for officers. At the beginning of the year, I met with all of the Dublin SU teams to introduce myself and work through our goals for the year ahead. As the year progressed, I would regularly check in with officers or drop in visit to see how they were getting on and if I could assist them in any way with any of their campaigns on campuses.

Class Rep Councils and Class Rep Trainings

I have attended Dublin Region SU Councils and provided a USI Update where applicable. I have also taken questions and received feedback at these Councils and passed on the feedback to USI Officer Board. As well as this, I made an effort to present at Class Rep Trainings on the work of USI. I have also acted as the chair of IT Tallaght SU Council throughout the year and it has been a pleasure.

TU Dublin Students' Union

At the beginning of the year, I was unsure where I could assist with the merging of ITTSU, ITBSU and DITSU. After the three SUs had drafted a constitution, I realised the assistance that USI could provide. A constitutional referendum was planned by the three SU's and I organised Officer Board to be on campuses on the 18th, 19th and 20th February to assist the three SU's in campaigning for a Yes vote. The constitution passed overwhelmingly in Tallaght, Blanchardstown and City Campus and set the foundation for the TU Dublin Students' Union.

I'd really like to commend the work of the three unions who have done stellar work in preparation for the TU Dublin Students' Union. Fair play to Amy, Megan, Lee, Pierre, Roisin, Rebecca, Jess, Kris and Luke for all the collaborative work you've done.

Local Campaigns

I have assisted MOs in the Dublin Region with a variety of local demonstrations.

Save Our Services - DITSU

The DITSU Save Our Services campaign against the reduction of library hours began on the 17th October with a silent protest outside the meeting of their Governing Body. Another action occurred the following week on the 24th October with a sit-in protest in the DIT Cathal Brugha Street Main Foyer.

Save Our Shepherd - DCU SU

The DCUSU SaveOurShepherd campaign to stop the deportation of their student Shepherd Machaya began on the 18th October. The petition for the campaign gained over 15,000 signatures and there was flyering and campaigning on the ground in DCUSU to inform students of the situation and get them to sign the petition. A protest was held outside the Department of Justice and Equality on the 19th October with students from DCU, TCD, IADT & NCAD; it was a strong silent protest with intense chanting at the end.

Safer Services - ITBSU

The ITBSU Safer Services demonstration took place on the 13th December. The campaign was protesting over the lack of safe bus services - The demands were for Fingal County Council to put in a bus shelter, lights, cameras and real time info. These services would ensure that no further students would be harassed or assaulted while waiting for the bus. The demonstration began at ITBSU and marched through Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and finished outside Fingal County Council, where speeches were made.

Aramark Off Our Campus - TCD

An Aramark Off Our Campus campaign protest took place on the 1st November outside the Westland Eats restaurant in the Hamilton Building of Trinity College. The campaign is supported by TCDSU and aims to remove Aramark from running food services on the campus. Aramark is a company that profits off the Direct Provision system which treats refugee inhumanely.

National Campaigns

Fund The Future

I worked with MO's to ensure that the FundTheFuture campaign on Publicly Funded Education would work on their campus. I communicated details to MOs, assisted with flyering, poster and class addresses.

On the day of FundTheFuture, I was based in Trinity College and spoke at the launch before rallying towards the Department of Education. I worked closely alongside the TCDSU President to ensure the success of the day.

Housing Activism & #RaiseTheRoof

I have worked tirelessly on housing activism throughout the year - The housing crisis affects Dublin

disproportionately; Dublin now has the 5th highest rents in Europe (ahead of Paris). Student accommodation and fighting the housing crisis this year was a priority for me.

I attended numerous National Homeless and Housing Coalition meetings on behalf of USI and voiced student concerns to ensure that student accommodation would be part of any campaign.

The October 3rd March had an incredible turnout and an astounding affect; a strong turnout of 12,000, including 6,000 students, rallied on Molesworth Street to demonstrate their frustration with the current housing crisis in Ireland. The effect this had is the passing of a Dáil motion which, among other things, recognises the housing crisis as an emergency. Details on the motion can be found [here](#).

I have remained involved with housing activism since October 3rd by speaking at the People's Assembly, attending the December 1st NHHHC Protest, speaking at the Raise The Roof re-launch, rallying students for the 9th March Dublin Demonstration.

Public Transport & BusConnects

In my work plan at the start of the year, I identified public transport as something that would specifically affect the Dublin Region. This coincided with the BusConnects Dublin Bus Network Redesign plan - I liaised with MOs as to how this would affect their students and made a submission on behalf of USI.

Event Organisation

I have organised and co-organised a variety of events throughout the year from Dublin Region PTO Training, USI Mature Student Conference and the USI Direct Provision Think-In.

Leas Uachtarán don Ghaeilge

Vice President for the Irish Language

Aoife Ní Dhéisigh

Léirmheas ar an mBliain

Táim tar éis an méid sin a fhoghlaim go dtí seo agus ba mhaith liom buíochas a thabhairt chuig ball an Choiste Cultúrtha agus chuile duine a ghlac páirt sna feachtais i mbliana. Bhí go leor rudaí an-nua dom i mbliana, mar is mise an chéad duine lánaimseartha sa ról seo ach bhain mé an-sult as!

Na Táillí Gaeltachta

An feachtas is mó domsa i mbliana ná #GaelFees. Bhí an-chuid stocaireacht i gceist, bhuail mé leis an tAire Joe Mc Hugh faoi dhó. Bhuail mé leis an ASTI agus an TUI agus thug an TUI suíocháin dom ar an Choiste Comhairleach um Polasaí Oideachais Gaeltachta. Thug an ASTI deis dom óráid a thabhairt ag crinniú den Choiste Oideachais agus beidh mé ag labhairt faoi na dúshláin d'ábhar oideachais ag Comhdháil an ASTI. Bhí ról lárnach ag an gCoiste Cultúrtha maidir leis an bhfeachtas seo. Bhí go leor tobsmaointeoireacht i gceist. Chuaigh an LU um

Feachtais agus mé féin go dtí an Cheathrú Rua chun fíis a chruthú le na mac léinn ansin. Chomh maith leis sin bhí Aoife PR in ann fíis eile a chruthú dúinn. Bhí seó bóthair eagraithe agus bhíos i Sligeach, Ollscoil Mhá Nuad agus DCU. Bhí béagnach míle litir seolta chuig an tAire Joe Mc Hugh. Bhí comhairliúcháin eagraithe leis an gComhairle Mhúinteoireachta chun meon na ndaltaí a chur chun cinn. Bhí agóid eagraithe taobh amuigh de Teach Laighean agus bhí deis agam stocaireacht a dhéanamh ag #SEAS18. Fuair muid €1m do na hábhar óidí leis an SAF ach ní leor é sin! Bhí seisiún eagraithe in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad chun smaointe a bhailiú don chéad chéim eile.

An Coiste Cultúrtha/NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce

Táim an-bhuíoch de bhall an Choiste as an méid tacaíocht a thug siad dom i mbliana. Nílím chun chuile duile a ainmniú anseo ach tá daoine ó gach ceantar páirteach. Bhí tús curtha don ghrúpa oibre nua sa Tuisceart i mbliana agus chur muid traenáil na meáin ar fail daoibh. Chomh maith leis sin fuair mé deis chun labhairt ag agóid an Dream Dearg i mBéal Feirste.

Taighde

Chaith mé an-chuid ama ag déanamh taighde i mbliana. Bhíos ag scríobh freagraire AMLÉ maidir leis an gcomhairliúcháin faoi na díollúintí. Táim fós ag déanamh oibre ar an tuairisc maidir le Oideachas na Gaeilge. Ghlac níos mó ná 1,500 daoine páirt sa súirbhé.

Cumarsáide

Bhí deis agam labhairt faoi obair an Aontais ar raidió, agus ar Nuacht RTÉ/TG4 go minic i mbliana. Bhí Meon Eile/Raidió na Life sásta am a thabhairt dom ag chuile agóid, nó feachtas agus bhíos in ann dul chuig Raidió na Gaeltachta chun buiséad 2019, lóistín, toiliú is mar sin de a phlé. Ní raibh muid ag tnúth leis an méid suim a bheadh ag na meáin i mbliana. Chaith mé an-chuid ama ag ullmhú agus ag déanamh taighde. Bhí sé an-úsáideach chun na feachtais a chur chun cinn cosúil le #SHAG19 nó na Táillí Gaeltachta nuair a bhí BLOC TG4 ann. Bhíos ag obair le na hOifigí Gaeilge don chuid is mó ach rinne mé iarracht chun tacaíocht a chur ar fail do chuile coláiste.

Seiminéar AMLÉ

Bhí Seiminéar AMLÉ ar siúl i rith Seachtain na Gaeilge in Ollscoil Mhá Nuad. Leath lá a bhí i gceist le panéal, plé faoi ISL, ceacht faoi na Táillí Gaeltachta agus na cumainn. Bhí Paula Melvin, Aindriú de Paor agus Liam Ó Maolaodha ar an bpanéal ag labhairt faoin tOireachtas, na meáin agus saol na nGael. Chomh maith leis sin bhí panéal ar siúl in IADT "Making a Home in the Irish Language". Bhain muid úsáid as Facebook live ansin agus táim an-sásta go raibh deis ag an Ollscoil in Brighton féachaint ar.

Traenáil na gCumann agus Conradh na Gaeilge

Bhí Traenáil na gCumann ar siúl i mBaile Átha Cliath ar an 12ú/13ú Deireadh Fómhair. Bhí an chéad lá ar siúl i dTeach an Ardmhéara, agus bhí an dara lá ar siúl i Conradh na Gaeilge. Bhí go leor cruinnithe agus pleanáil ag teastáil. Bhí crinniú agam leis an gConradh ar a laghad dhá uair sa mhí. Bhí deis agam freastal ar an Ard Fhéis i mbliana.

Is minic a d'oibrigh mé, go speisialta, le hAlswyn Ní Aonghusa Ní Dhúill, an Comhordaitheoir Tríú Leibhéal sa Chonradh agus táim an-bhuíoch as an cabhair sin. Is ceart dom mo bhuíochas a ghabháil le Julian de Spáinn agus Aodhán Ó Deá freisin, a thug cabhair agus comhairle dom le linn na bliana.

An tOireachtas

D'fhreastal mé ar an tOireachtas le Conradh na Gaeilge i gCiarraí, bhí breis is 500 mic léinn ann. Táim páirteach den Bhord Stiúrtha agus bhíos ag tabhairt cabhair leis an gcomórtas díospoireachta, oíche na mac léinn agus ag freastal ar na comórtais. Sin an ócáid is mó i saol na nGael agus molaim daoibh freastal an bhliain seo chugainn in Citywest. Bíonn cruinnithe agam le na stiúrthúirí eile go minic, agus táimid ag obair ar plean stráitéiseach don todhchaí.

Neart Eile!

Bhí deis agam freastal ar mórshiúl Bród in beagnach gach ceantar, bhí go leor oibre i gceist le #RaisetheRoof, SUT, Mná i gCeannas, Traenáil Bhándearg agus na himeachtaí eile. Rinne muid iarrachta chun ceangal a dhéanamh leis an nGaeilge le haghaidh gach feachtas, tá go leor fós le foghlaim faoi sin. Táim ag eagrú na gradam SAAI le beirt eile ón bhfoireann agus mar sin táim gnóthach le sin faoi láthair. Bhí deis agam labhairt ag an agóid #Thisisnotconsent agus bhíos páirteach sa fíis le haghaidh Now This ina dhiaidh. Bhí níos mó ná sin i gceist, chur ceist orm faoi má tá ceisteanna agat.

Le Grá,

Aoife

Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs

Leas-Uachtarán do Chúrsaí larchéime

Andrew Forde

With Congress having created the part time position of Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs in 2018 it has been an honour and a challenge acting building this role in to the one intended by Congress.

M.O. Capacity Building

My objective has been to assist member organisations build up their capacity in engaging and representing their postgraduate community. I have worked to inject postgraduate focused exercises in to SUT and SUT plus and provide support to member organisations throughout the academic year.

USI Capacity Building

My objective has been to ensure that the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs is just one of eleven USI officers supporting our postgraduates in USI. I have worked with other members of officerboard to encourage that their work is "postgradproofed" and the team have very successfully considered postgraduates within their individual briefs.

Workers Rights

My objective has been to better inform the postgraduate community of their rights within academic work and work undertaken to support their academic work. However this goal was expanded when we collaborated with SIPTU, to investigate the current economic and working rights available to postgraduates. We have surveyed, visited campuses and are moving towards a charter of best practice.

Postgraduate Conference

My objective has been to hold a conference focused on postgraduate issues that will contribute to the national dialogue. At the time of writing, the USI Postgraduate Symposium 2019 is due to take place on the 28th of March and it is my hope that such a gathering of postgraduates, activists and experts will further progress USI'S postgraduate ambitions.

Eurodoc

My objective has been to engage and collaborate with Eurodoc to represent postgraduate issues within the European arena. USI has been an active and informed member. We have utilised Eurodoc to provide international context to issues in Ireland and drawn upon their expertise as required.

External Representation

The objective was to champion the existence of this new role amongst stakeholders in the higher education landscape. The role was broadcasted to all relevant stakeholders and where possible relationships were formed. I also got twitter, which still proves somewhat mind boggling. There is room for growth in this area as the role develops.

Review of Postgraduate Affairs position

The objective has been to consider how the role fits within USI, how USI facilitates the role and whether there is a need to move the role towards a full time position at such a time, when this is financially feasible. In short, this objective is manifest in a motion before congress for the position to become full time.

Postgraduate Roadshow

The objective has been to visit individual campuses to talk all things postgrad with their sabbatical team and their postgraduates. I have dedicated, as best as practicable, to visiting a college once a week for all of semester 2. This will continue post congress.

Status of a PhD Campaign

My objective has been to start a conversation around the current status of a PhD student. In Ireland a PhD student is classified as a student, and I have worked to investigate if there is space to expand that status so as to import labour protections in to the PhD experience. I have worked with Eurodoc, expanded the coalition of interested parties and will bring it to your attention on Congress floor to spark the conversation further.

OFFICER REPORT:

Vice President for Equality & Citizenship

Leas-Uachtarán do Chomhionannais agus Saoránacht

Aisling Cusack

Equality campaigns were the reason I got involved in the student movement. It was an honour to be your Vice President for Equality and Citizenship, a role supported by grassroots activism, student societies and students' union officers. I would like to thank all who have supported me in my work throughout the year.

Access

Access to education and participation is a core element of the work of the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship. Throughout the year, I have sat on the National Access Plan Steering Group, the Fund for Students with Disabilities, Student Assistance Fund Implementation Group and other committees within the Department of Education and the Higher Education Authority. I also acquired funding from the HEA to ensure that students from each of the National Access Plan target-groups were able to attend the Annual Access Forum in the Department of Education and Skills in March.

Voter Registration

After co-leading the national voter registration campaign as last year's Vice President for the Dublin Region, this year, I continued to lead the campaign, working with regional Vice Presidents to ensure voter registration drives continued to happen on campuses in the lead up to the close of the register of electors.

I authored a submission to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on modernisation of the electoral registration process.

I organised an online #SeanadShakeUp campaign around Seanad registration and supports for MOs to run voter registration drives for graduates. On reflection, I would advise MOs to work with their institutions to ensure a voter registration form for the Seanad goes out alongside any information relating to graduations, as it is particularly hard to engage with graduates.

I put together information regarding the European Parliament and Local Elections happening on May 24th, to give a broad explanation of what each institution does and how it affects you.

Students with Disabilities

I have sat on the Board of Directors for the AHEAD and the Fund for Students with Disabilities Implementation Group, where I have vocalised the needs of students, ensuring they are at the centre of all discussions.

I organised training for SU Officers around supporting students with disabilities and have organised the 'National Conference for Students Living With Disabilities' which will take place April 10th.

Gender

I expanded Women Lead into a full two-day event with over 65 registered participants. The event included workshops on development of women's representation in Irish politics, students fighting for education, abortion rights in Northern Ireland (NUS-USI), social media, dealing with trolls, public speaking, campaigning 101, politics and the patriarchy, and more. This event is of great importance to give women the tools and help build self-confidence to overcome the specific barriers women face accessing leadership roles.

I was part of the organising committee for the International Women's Day #Time4Equality campaign which saw events happening all throughout Ireland on March 8th. I spoke at press conferences and to the media about how students are affected by issues such as the gender pay gap and sexual violence. I addressed the crowd at O'Connell Bridge, which we shut down for over 2 hours.

In October, I spoke to the Young European's Lab in the German Bundestag about the success of Students for Choice and the Together for Yes campaign.

In December, I spoke at a protest calling for public ownership of the new National Maternity Hospital.

In January, I addressed NWCi's FemFest about my leadership journey as a queer woman and the equality issues I see affecting young women today.

In February, I was a speaker at the ESHTe Conference. I discussed the importance of integration and inclusion of minority groups in ending sexual violence and harassment at third-level.

I was a panelist at the NUS-USI Women's Conference.

I have also represented students on the National Strategy for Women and Girls in the Department of Justice and Equality.

I organised training for SU officers around supporting students in the aftermath of sexual assault and harassment with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre.

Work has begun on the gender equality audit passed at Congress 2018, which will first look at sabbatical positions, followed by executive positions and class representatives.

Racism, Ethnic Minority and Direct Provision

I organised unconscious bias training for SU officers at the beginning of the year.

I had Evgeny Shtorn, an asylum seeker living in Direct Provision, deliver the keynote address to Pink Training 2018. Originally from the Kazakh Soviet Republic, Evgeny was forced to flee Russia where he and his partner had lived for 13 years.

Throughout the year, I engaged with the Right To Work campaign, MASI, Immigrant Council of Ireland, Irish Refugee Council, ENAR Ireland, Amnesty Ireland and other leading experts about the impact of racism, xenophobia, and the system of Direct Provision in Ireland.

I organised a Direct Provision Think-in in NCAD. The purpose of this day was to bring together student activists to learn from students living in Direct Provision, share knowledge, challenges and ideas and bolster students to start working on initiatives in their campuses or local areas to highlight the problems with the system to students and people in their communities.

LGBTI+

In the months leading to December, much of my work included organising Pink Training, which saw over 350 people come together to share their experiences, and engage in workshops about LGBTQI+ issues, rights and activism.

The event took place on the same weekend as World Aids Day. I took this as an opportunity to promote the #KnowYourStatus campaign and inform people that Undetectable = Untransmittable with drone footage of a human 'U = U'. People living with HIV that are on effective treatment cannot pass on HIV to others. This was seen by over 13,000 people on the day on our Facebook, 11,000 on our twitter and was also shared in news articles across the world.

In September, I organised training for SU officers on LGBTI+ Awareness and Inclusivity.

I attended rallies and protests supporting the introduction of objective sex education in schools which would include LGBTI+ relationships and identities, as well as education on consent and abortion.

I was a panelist at the NUS-USI LGBT+ Conference.

In February, I spoke at a protest outside the Russian Embassy condemning the violation and persecution of LGBTI+ people in Chechnya.

I co-authored a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on Relationships and Sexuality Education with the Vice President for Welfare.

International Students

I have sat on the Board of Directors for the Irish Council for International Students (ICOS) throughout the year and partnered with ICOS to facilitate the International Student Fora that took place regionally.

I have also raised issues of visas and health insurance at High Level Group meetings on International Education in the Department of Education and Skills.

Sustainability

I have worked with the USI Energy and Sustainability Manager to ensure that our campaigns are more sustainable. I have also made presentations on sustainability in the Department of Education, attended the Climate Case Ireland court case, climate action rallies and worked on our Fairtrade Ireland partnership.

NUS-USI President

Uachtarán ANML-AMLÉ

Olivia Potter-Hughes

Consent: kNOw MORE!

NUS-USI launched a Northern Ireland wide survey targeted at students and their understanding of consent and sexual assault in December 2019. Our findings will be launched at NUS-USI Conference 2019. The survey was the first of its kind across NI and received 2295 responses in total from all eleven of our member unions.

Additionally, we provided disclosure training from Nexus NI for officers ahead of the survey being launched, and we provided a consultation response for the Gillen Review into the NI criminal justice system's handling of rape and serious sexual assault trials, as well as submitting an official response to the Department of Justice domestic homicide review.

Mental Health: Keeping You In Mind

We have created a mental health resource collection at: <http://nus-usi.org/keeping-you-in-mind/>, on local support services, a free online GP for students, a registered private counselling directory, an updated PSNI student survival guide, a student parents hub and more. We have also been lobbying the government for more investment in mental health facilities and delivery of a government led cross-departmental mental health strategy.

#BrexitWrecksIt - NUS-USI has been carrying out significant policy research, had many lobbying meetings with politicians such as local parties, the Shadow Secretary of State Tony Lloyd and the Secretary of State's

Special Advisor Kris Hopkins, met with academics such as Dr Katy Hayward, attended meetings of the Erasmus+ advisory group and the All-Island Civic Dialogue on Brexit, and presented NUS-USI's Brexit case study to a NICVA civil society event.

Reproductive Justice: #TrustUs

TrustUs is the student-led campaign for free, safe, legal and local abortion rights in Northern Ireland. The full campaign briefing is available at: <http://nus-usi.org/trustus/>

NUS-USI launched a #HometoVote campaign alongside NUS's Women's campaign, to financially assist Irish students studying in the UK to travel home to vote in the repeal referendum. 136 students applied successfully for the travel bursary, and £7400 approx. was donated by NUS UK, NUS Scotland and NUS-USI collectively.

We lobbied MPs and Peers by email ahead of Westminster votes on the decriminalisation of abortion in England, Wales and NI and received positive responses, and submitted written evidence to Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into abortion law in Northern Ireland, recounting how views on abortion have evolved within the NI student movement over the years.

Love Equality

Love Equality is the civil coalition for marriage equality in Northern Ireland, led by Amnesty International NI, The Rainbow Project, Cara-friend, HereNI, NIC-ICTU and NUS-USI. The coalition aims to achieve the legislation of marriage equality in Northern Ireland through public action, lobbying, and sponsoring potential legislation.

Love Equality also has attempted to achieve marriage equality by sponsoring multiple bills in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons in Westminster over the course of this year, to no avail.

This year we met with Michelle O'Neill, Conor McGinn MP (the sponsor of our bill in the House of Commons) and Tánaiste Simon Coveney as part of the Love Equality Coalition and marched in our annual March for Marriage Equality in Belfast, where over 20,000 people took to the streets to demand equal marriage for Northern Ireland.

Irish Language Taskforce

This year with the support of the USI Irish Language Officer we created the first ever NUS-USI Irish Language Taskforce. Special thanks to activist Grian Ní Dhaimhín who has been central to establishing this work.

We hope to see this work continue in future years and develop into strong grassroots, student led campaign for the Irish Language in the North, and continue to lobby for the introduction of an Irish Language act here.

UUSU Referendum

We gained a 90.2% mandate in the vote. This result means that UUSU will remain affiliated to NUS-USI. Massive

thank you to the NUS-USI officers and staff, Kevin McStravock the lead Yes campaigner, QUBSU officers, USI Officerboard and members, and NUS UK, Scotland and Wales officers who helped us to victory!

Trade Unions

We organised a joint Student Workers: Know Your Employment Rights! event for students with Prospect, BECTU and Unite NI trade union at Belfast Metropolitan College on student workers rights. We also had speakers from The National Society of Apprentices and the Queen's University Students' Union Postgraduate Officer Rachel Powell speaking on workers rights for postgraduate students and apprentices here, as well as trade unionists from the partner unions.

This year we have renewed our partnership agreement with NIC ICTU to pursue joint ambitions and to provide support to each organisation's campaigning and strategic priorities. The Northern Ireland Committee (NIC) of the ICTU is the representative body for 34 trade unions with approximately 200,000 members across Northern Ireland.

Student Housing

This year we have begun exploring setting up a Rate Your Landlord system in partnership with Unipol.

Protests and Demonstrations

- Rally for Remain
- Rally for Choice
- March for Marriage Equality
- United Against Racism Diversity Carnival
- An Dream Dearg Protest
- Reclaim the night
- International Women's Day March
- Belfast Pride
- Foyle Pride
- NUS-USI Events
- SUT & SUT+
- St. Mary's & Stranmillis PTO Training
- Student Governor Training
- FEstival
- National Society of Apprentices Roadshow
- 30+ Freshers and Refreshers events
- BAEM Conference
- Trans Conference
- FE Conference

- LGBT+ Conference
- Women's Conference
- Disabled Students' Conference
- NUS-USI Conference
- NUS UK 'Turnaround'

US undertook detailed consultation on its future between November 2018 and February 2019.

As a group it operates to a turnover of around £22m in 2017/18 with 223 staff, but 2019/20 will see a turnover of £11m with just over 100 staff, and 2020/21 to a turnover of nearer £7.5m.

This equates to roughly 65 per cent reduction 2017 to 2020. The workforce will be half the size it was 12 months ago by the end of this year, and various work will have been stopped, outsourced, paused or adapted pending reform.

NUS UK Turnaround has occupied a significant amount of staff and officer time within NUS-USI this year and we are extremely saddened to lose both Laura Stobo, our manager and Mike Day, our director this year as part of this process.

NUS-USI President Olivia Potter-Hughes



National Student Engagement Programme

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn

NStEP: Shaping a new strategy

The National Student Engagement Programme was launched in April 2016 by the Higher Education Authority (HEA), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) with the aim of enhancing student engagement in Irish Higher Education. NStEP has completed 3 years of work through two key strands of work: National Student Training Programme and the Development of Institutional Capacity.

Over 2,500 Class Reps have completed the NStEP Introductory Class Rep training since 2016 with specialised training for online students, masters students and part time learners developed. 16 Colleges have completed an analysis workshop to develop strategies for better student engagement across a range of topics. To support Colleges with developments in specific areas the 5 NStEP projects have developed tools, resources and guidance in the following areas:

- Class Rep Recruitment
- Programme Design and Review
- Feedback Mechanisms & Data
- Strategic Plans & Decision-Making
- Staff Roles and Capacity Building



Having completed the initial three year work plan NStEP is now seeking your views on what a three year strategy should look like and your ideas on how to ensure the programme continues to develop and enhance a partnership approach to student engagement across Irish Higher Education. To respond, please visit studentengagement.ie/consultation and complete the consultation form before April 12th 2019.

Coming Soon: Call For Student Trainers

Are you enthusiastic, upbeat & approachable? Do you understand the Class Rep Role? Would you like to develop the skills of a trainer? NStEP will be seeking new Student Trainers for the



upcoming 2019-2020 academic year to deliver our training programme to Class Reps across Ireland. The Pool is made up of talented students from different colleges who receive training and are paid to deliver the Class Rep Training sessions. All pool members must be full or part time students and are required to complete a residential training course in late August.

Online applications will open on Tuesday April 23rd . Check out studentengagement.ie and follow @NStEPie for updates on twitter.

Institutions

Athlone Institute of Technology
Carlow College
Cork Institute of Technology
Dublin Business School
Dublin City University
Dublin Institute of Technology
Galway – Mayo Institute of Technology
Griffith College Dublin
Hibernia College
Institute of Art, Design and Technology
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
Institute of Technology Carlow
Institute of Technology Sligo
Institute of Technology Tallaght
Institute of Technology Tralee
Limerick Institute of Technology
Letterkenny Institute of Technology
Maynooth University
National College of Ireland
NUI Galway
University College Cork
University of Limerick
Waterford Institute of Technology

The National Student Engagement Programme is funded and supported by:

HEA | AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS
HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY



QQI

Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann



Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn