**USI National Council – 18/08/2012**

Comhairle Náisiúnta AMLÉ – GMIT

**Report of the President**

**Tuairisc an Uachtarán**

1. **Bank of Ireland Undergraduate Loans**

Following the announcement of ‘College Finance’, it became apparent that this initiative would not be isolated to one institution. Furthermore, it became clear that Students’ Unions were not adequately consulted on their institutions involvement. USI swiftly set about assessing the situation in each MO, researching the scheme and composing a briefing document which was disseminated to MOs.

Once it was clear that a majority of institutions were involved in the initiative and, as a further concern, a discrepancy existed between information provided by local branches and Bank of Ireland centrally, USI launched a media campaign against the scheme on the basis of poor information provision, lack of consultation and implications.

Accordingly, a meeting was arranged with senior representatives of Bank of Ireland to discuss the loan initiative. USI raised concerns over the contradictory information and the lack of consultation with student representatives. BOI agreed to consult with student representatives on the undergraduate loan and further products aimed at third level students. Furthermore, the bank agreed to provide a briefing document for SU Officers.

1. **Bank of Ireland/Department of Education & Skills Postgraduate Loans**

At the close of the meeting regarding undergraduate loans, it was revealed by senior representatives within the Bank that a postgraduate loan, ‘backed by the Department of Education & Skills’, would be launched on the following Tuesday. USI raised a number of concerns in relation to this postgraduate loan and ascertained as much information as possible.

A media stunt was prepared for the postgraduate loan launch and USI compiled information on the scheme for an MO briefing document and contacted the Department of Education and Bank of Ireland to get information on the launch and a copy of the BOI press release. Subsequent to this announcement, USI broke the story to the national media and launched a campaign to highlight the negative implications of the initiative. We received unprecedented media coverage and worked closely with the Oireachtas to shape the message.

I met with a number of postgraduate representatives to discuss the implications of the scheme in greater detail and formulate a strategy of response. It was decided that USI would take a proactive stance and propose a solution to the issue of funding postgraduate education. The first step in this process was to organised a postgraduate seminar and invite postgraduates from all over Ireland to come together to discuss a more equitable solution. Following this, I engaged a research who will take the discussions outlined at the postgraduate seminar and research international best practice so that USI can lobby the Department to implement a fairer scheme in the interim.

Conscious that such a solution may take in excess of twelve months to implement I set up a meeting with senior representatives of the Irish League of Credit Unions to discuss the possibility of offering a more equitable solution to prospective postgraduate students in the short-term. The ILCU were very open to the idea of catering for a postgraduate market and indicated that the various Credit Unions are eager to lend at the current time and this may be a viable option for all concerned. I have provided the ILCU with a comprehensive briefing document that is being disseminated to all local Credit Union branches. I have also produced an article for the Credit Union magazine which is circulated to all local branches.

1. **Commercial Services**

As eluded to in a previous report, I consulted a number of companies prior to taking office in order to assess the viability of USI engaging in commercial activity for the benefit of our members. USI is currently in discussions with several companies in relation to offering commercial services through [www.usi.ie](http://www.usi.ie). One initiative which I am particularly interested in is a potential partnership with Rehab Recycle, an organisation which encourages companies to pass on their out-of-date and unused computer and other electrical equipment for the benefit of others.

This electrical equipment is then sold at very low pricesto students and other groups in society (e.g. a student could acquire a laptop for €120). While this is very beneficial to students who have difficulty financing the purchase of equipment necessary for college, it also helps to safeguard our environment and supporting the employment of people with disabilities.

USI is also in discussions with a company to utilise a section of USI’s Facebook as a merchandise store. This would allow USI to facilitate the selling of SU merchandise and other products online for the benefit of students and Students’ Unions. We are also in discussions with another company in relation to utilising ‘live marketing’ on the USI website. This would allow companies to offer up-to-the-minute discounts to USI members through entering their details on the USI website and receiving the discount via e-mail or text.

1. **USI Ents Training 2012**

In organising USI Ents Training 2012 I kept in mind the need for practical modules and quality of speaker. With this as an objective, I felt that there was a great opportunity for entertainments to be viewed positively outside the walls of the college, gaining positive PR for Students’ Unions in the process. Accordingly, I contacted Iseult O’Doherty of Carr Communications and discussed the role of the entertainments officer and some of the PR challenges they face throughout a typical year. Iseult then designed a module around the issues raised.

I also felt there was a need for practical and experienced advice in the area of organising trips. Accordingly, I engaged Marathon Travel who organised the transport facilities for Oxegen and London 2012, to give a module on running mystery tours, class trips, etc. Marathon Travel have many years experience in this area. Another important area which has often been neglected by way of training is the importance of securing sponsorship. To this end, we arranged for a representative of The Wheel to give a talk on securing sponsorship. The organisation is very experienced in securing corporate sponsorship having advised the non-governmental sector in this area since 1999.

I also included presentations on booking acts and venues, accounting practices for entertainments, and a roundtable session with past Ents Officers which worked very well with other roles at Students’ Union Training 2012.

1. **USI/Irish Times ‘College Times’ Partnership**

TheMedia & Communications Executive and I had further meetings with senior staff in the Irish Times to discuss the USI/Irish Times partnership initiative- ‘Campus Times’. They have agreed to set up a section on the Irish website entitled Campus Times, which will serve as a hub for all issues pertaining to students. This initiative is a partnership between USI and the Irish Times and will be branded and promoted as such.

As part of the partnership USI have produced videos to help prospective third level students with the transition to higher education during the leaving certificate results/CAO 1st round offer period. These videos will include top tips for college, students talking about college life, advice from welfare officers on accommodation and life in college, etc.

Recent discussions with the Irish Times have revolved around the medium-term strategic direction of Campus Times once the Leaving Certificate results cease to be an issue. The intention of USI and the Irish Times is to enhance the section as a student news service, with contributions coming from student journalists from across the country.

1. **USI Advisory Board, Student Universal Support Ireland**

Following considerable lobbying and discussions with the Department of Education & Skills, it was decided that USI would form a SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) Forum where MO Officers would represent their own views and their students views with issues arising in the grant application process. The purpose of this forum is to communicate to the SUSI support system any known difficulties that have arisen. USI set out the Terms of Reference for the forum and I have designated the Deputy President and Vice-President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance to sit on this committee along with Students’ Union representatives once it has been set up.

1. **Operational Requirements**

USI has welcomed our new General Manager, Mr. Ben Archibald, to the organisation. Ben was formerly a senior staff member in Pavee Point and is a great addition to the USI team. As Ben has only been employed for the fortnight preceding this report, I have overseen all operational matters during this time period. Perhaps the most pressing issue in this regard has been the new office. Following a period of annual leave taken by the Landlord’s Solicitor, he received the consent of the bank to the Lease.

Once these formalities were completed, I signed off on the first bank transfer to the landlord and contacted Lyons Kenny Solicitors to arrange to complete matters. The Landlord signed the lease and we received the keys to the office. Aside from a small amount of construction work which has to be undertaken all other operational requirements are ready for USI to complete the moving process by last week of August/first week of September.

1. **Students’ Union Training 2012**

During USI Students’ Union Training 2012 I assisted Member Organisations with queries as well as overseeing the logistics of the week. Following the training week, I dealt with the Accommodation Manager in relation to issues remaining with the accommodation. Despite there being several instances of damage, the Accommodation Manager was pleased at the conduct of attendees overall.

1. **Marriage Equality**

In the lead up to the LGBT Noise March for Marriage UCD Students’ Union organised a demonstration outside the Department of An Taoiseach with the support of USI. I attended this event, a ‘Rainbow Wedding’, and participated in a considerable number of media pieces surrounding the event and the wider issue of marriage equality on the day. I also attended a USI-organised briefing in the run up to the March for Marriage which was facilitated by Marriage Equality and LGBT Noise. This allowed Officer Board to gain a deeper insight into the issues that face the LGBT Community and we discussed where USI can be of assistance during the campaign.

1. **Officer Board Professional Development**

I organised for USI Officer Board to meet with Fergal Costello in the Higher Education Authority to gain an insight into the challenges facing higher education in Ireland over the next ten years. We discussed the HEA’s own plans for the period ahead as well as broader discussions on participation rates, the Students’ Assistance Fund, the RGAM Model, future of the Student Contribution Charge and the National Strategy for Higher Education.

Following the meeting I facilitated a recap session to go over any aspects of the discussion which officers had further questions on.

I feel this was a very productive session for all attendees. It is crucial that all of Officer Board have a solid understanding of the intricacies of the Higher Education system in Ireland.

Due to the positive feedback from Officer Board, I have requested that a similar exercise be afforded to Member Organisations. The Higher Education Authority have accepted this request and I will set a date for this in due course.

**Appendix**

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 13/7/12 | Higher Education Authority | HEA Briefing for USI Officer Board |
| 17/7/12 | Department of Education & Skills | Roundtable meeting with stakeholders and American Education Leaders. |
| 23/7/12 | Officerboard | Strategic Planning |
| 23/7/12 | Jim Murray IOTI | Discussed IOTI working with USI |
| 24/7/12 | Meeting with Irish Times Senior Staff | Discussion of Campus Times, a USI-Irish Times initiative |
| 27/7/12 | Meeting with Marketing Company | Re: USI Website Commercial Services |
| 30/7/12 | Officerboard | Strategic Planning |
| 30/7/12 | LGBT Noise and Marriage Equality | Briefing from both organisations in the run up to the March for Marriage. |
| 31/7/12 | UCD Students’ Union | Civil Marriage Ceremony |
| 2/8/12 | Conradh na Gaeilge | Discussion of USI partnership |
| 2/8/12 | PleaseTalk Forum | Hosted by DIT |
| 3/8/12 | Bank of Ireland Senior Staff | Student Loans and SU engagement |
| 7/8/12 | Officerboard | Strategic Planning |
| 8/8/12 | IT Blanchardstown Students’ Union | Meeting with Students’ Union to discuss their priorities for their year, finances, etc. |
| 8/8/12 | Meeting with President, UCD Students’ Union | Discussed year ahead, challenges facing the sector and opportunities for the student movement |
| 9/8/12 | Meeting w/ Graduate Students’ Union, TCD | Discussion re: Postgraduate Loan |
| 9/9/12 | Meeting w/ Irish Times Senior Staff | Further Discussion of Partnership (USI Media & Communications Executive also in attendance) |
| 10/8/12 | Irish League of Credit Unions | Meeting with Kieran O’Donnell and John Knox, ILCU, re: Postgraduate Interest Rates |

**Media Engagement:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Topic** |
| 26/7/12 | Article for Munster Express | Challenges facing Incoming Students |
| 31/6/12 | Castlebar Community Radio | Marriage Equality |
| 31/6/12 | FM104 | Marriage Equality |
| 31/6/12 | Newstalk | Marriage Equality |
| 2/8/12 | Northern Sound | Undergraduate Loans |
| 7/8/12 | Radio Kildare | Undergraduate Loans |
| 8/8/12 | Radio Connemara | Undergraduate Loans |
| 8/8/12 | Q102 | Undergraduate Loans |
| 8/8/12 | Cork’s 96FM | Undergraduate Loans |
| 8/8/12 | Cork’s 103FM | Undergraduate Loans |
| 8/8/12 | Limerick Live 95 | Undergraduate Loans |
| 7/8/12 | RTE Radio One's 'News at One' | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Q102 | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | FM104 | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Cork's 96FM | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Cork's 103FM | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Limerick Live 95 | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | LMFM | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Dublin's Sunshine Radio | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | Castlebar Community Radio | Postgraduate Loan |
| 7/8/12 | 4FM | Postgraduate Loan |
| 9/8/12 | Inishowen Community Radio | Postgraduate Loans |
| 10/8/12 | Tipp FM | Graduate Unemployment |
| 10/8/12 | Highland Radio | Investing in Education |

**Expenses Claimed – Own Transport**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **To** | **From** | **Purpose** | **Distance** | **Cost** |
| N/A |  |  |  |  |  |

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Purchaser** |
| 6/8/12 | Tea | UCD Students’ Union |
| 2/8/12 | Lunch | DITSU |

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| **Leave** | **Date** |
| N/A |  |

**Report of the Deputy President/Campaigns Officer**

Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán do Feachtais

**1. Students’ Union Training (SUT)**

During our Students’ Union Training along with Officer Board I assisted any MO that had queries, I liaised with the Accommodation Complex Manager, I welcomed and introduced speakers and assisted them with directions and parking. I worked alongside Athlone Students’ Union with evening activities and organising transport to and from the various events. When the week was over I organised for Officer Board to collect the relevant presentations from speakers in their remit and I compiled over 30 presentations into a shared DropBox file that I have shared with all MO officers.

1. **Dublin Region Students’ Unions**

During SUT I held the first Dublin Regional Council. I was a short meeting to introduce myself as their area contact for the year ahead, what support I can offer them and a further breakdown of USI and how National Council is run. Following the meeting I created a Facebook page specific to the Sabbatical Officers in the Dublin Region Students’ Union. In the run up to National Council at GMIT I prepared guidelines and checklists for upcoming SU events such as Class Rep Training events and preparing for Guest Speakers.

1. **USI Booklet**

In the run up to the new academic term I have starting to compile a brief booklet on USI containing a section on USI’s history, the work USI Officers carry out, and a variety of the campaigns we aim to roll out this year. This book will be available to MO officers, Class Reps and Non-affiliated Students’ Union Officers.

1. **USI Video**

For USI Promotion and awareness along with our Media and Communications Officer I have begun to prepare a short USI video that focuses on our MO campuses and the daily student life with the overall message highlighting the work USI Officers are carrying out on an annual basis for the students.

1. **National Council Effectiveness Working Group**

The President set up the National Council Effectiveness Working Group that met in NCI this week. We had roughly 16 MO Officers from across the country gather together to delve into the working and running of National Council. I chaired the meeting and at the end of each discussion on the various different topics to do with the two day National Council I did my best to express all the views into one recommendation for that specific heading. It was successful meeting with our QA&AA Officer taking the minutes and our President looking over them and sending them out but during the day it was clear that 4 separate groups need to take responsibility for National Council to ensure an effective and efficient National Council is ran at each 4-6 week date. The four groups are; MO Officers, Officer Board, Steering Committee and the Host MO.

1. **SUSI Forum with QA&AA Officer**

Following discussions between SUSI, DES and the USI President, it was decided that USI would formulate a SUSI (Student Universal Support Ireland) Forum where MO Officers would represent their own views and their students views with any issues that may arise in the Grant Application process and the feeling on the SUSI support system that has been set up and if there are any known difficulties that have arisen. The QA&AA Officer and I set out the Terms of Reference for the forum and we will both sit on the committee when it is set up.

I also met with our Media and Executive Officer to combine a SUSI promotional plan to go to MO’s to their students with the important SUSI details but also ensuring MO’s were aware to get further support with their own SUSI queries.

1. **Marriage Equality Demo with UCD SU and LGBT Noise March for Marriage**

In the run up to the LGBT Noise March for Marriage UCD Students’ Union organised an Equal Marriage Demo outside the Department of an Taoiseach with the support of USI. I liaised with the UCD SU Campaigns officer to run through a checklist and I also attended the event.

USI Officer Board were briefed in the run up to the March for Marriage by two organisations Marriage Equality and LGBT Noise to give up a deeper insight into the issues that face the LGBT Community and we discussed where USI OB can be of assistance during the march.

1. **Welfare 101 Campaigning Module**

In conjunction with the Welfare Officer and the Equality & Citizenship we prepared a presentation for the Welfare Officers on how to run Campaigns, Welfare Campaigning focus and campaign inclusion. We presented this at the start of the Welfare Top-Up training set up by our Welfare Officer.

1. **CO Engagement:**

**UCD Students’ Union –** Marriage Equality Ceremony assistance and attended the demo. Met with SU President to discuss the role of an SU President and the challenges and areas that she may face over the year.

**IT Blanchardstown Students’ Union –** Along with the President with met with the 4 officers to discuss what work USI Officers carry out ad our plans for the year. They also went their main objectives for the year and where USI can be of help.

**UL Students’ Union –** I’m preparing a USI Booklet that the UL Students’ Union has requested that will be produced at their first Class Rep Council to give Reps an insight into USI.

**NCI SU** – Had a brief meeting with the President to discuss their SU budget and where I could be of assistance and I asked the VP for the Southern Region to give an insight into SU Budgets to him also.

**Appendix**

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 13th July | HEA | OB met with a member of the HEA, Fergal Costello (Head of Funding for Institutes of Technology ad DIT) |
| 16th May-20th May | Students’ Union Training | SUT for all MO Students’ Union Officers |
| 30th July | OB Phone Conference | Start of the week Phone Conference to go through OB plans for the coming week. |
| 30th July | LGBT Noise and Marriage Equality | Briefing from both organisations in the run up to the March for Marriage. |
| 1st August | Officer Board | All members of OB in HQ for intense planning and preparation. |
| 2nd August | PleaseTalk Forum | Hosted by DIT. |
| 3rd August | Welfare Top Up Training | Co presented on Welfare Campaigns |

**Membership Engagement**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **CO** | **Details** |
| 31st July | UCD Students’ Union | Civil Marriage Ceremony |
| 8th August | IT Blanchardstown | The President and I met with the new SU Team and we looked at their priorities for their year. |

**Expenses Claimed – Own Transport**

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| **Date** | **To** | **From** | **Purpose** | **Distance** | **Cost** |
| 16th July | AIT | Crumlin, Dublin | SUT Training | 119km @ 35c | 41.65 |
| 20th July | Crumlin, Dublin | AIT | Return Journey | 119km @ 35c | 41.65 |
| 8th August | Crumlin | Blanchardstown + return | MO Visit | 27.2 @ 35c | 9.52 |

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Purchaser** |
| 16th July | Fair Trade Chocolate Bar | MSU President |
| 20th July | X5 100% Cotton Socks | MSU Development Officer |
| 7th August | Lunch | NCI SU |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Leave** | **Date** |
| Annual Leave | Friday 27th July |

**Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán do Leas-Uachtarán do Ghnóthaí Acadúla agus Dhearbhú Cáilíochta**

**Report of the VP Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance**

1. **Bank of Ireland Student Loans**

After the Bank of Ireland announcement of the ‘College Finance’ launch in DCU and Mary Immaculate and Irish Times article indicating other colleges signing up to this scheme it became apparent many MO’s had not been consulted on their institutions involvement. The President tasked me with finding out the situation in each MO, researching the scheme and composing a briefing document. As this all happened within one day many MO’s were not contactable however of those who were some of the information received from local BOI branches was in contradiction to the information published by BOI. I researched the scheme as well as other similar schemes and composed a briefing document which was circulated to all MO’s. I contacted the IOTI and IUA to find out any involvement they may have had but it became apparent BOI were approaching each institution or in a few cases the institutions were contacting BOI after the ‘Trinity Finance’ launch. With the assistance of AITSU I set up a meeting with Bank of Ireland. The President and I raised our concerns with the contradictory information and the lack of consultation with student representatives. BOI agreed to consult with student representatives on any further products aimed at third level students and to provide a briefing document for SU Officers.

I worked with the President and Media Executive to prepare for the postgraduate loan launch, compiled information on the scheme for the MO briefing document and contacted the Department of Education and Bank of Ireland to get information on the launch and a copy of the BOI press release. As the launch photo shoot had taken place weeks before the media stunt was not suitable.

1. **Students’ Union Training 2012**

On the final day of SUT I distributed the feedback sheets to each officer and collected them upon completion. I summarised the responses and reported to Officer Board on the main points which came up. I contacted each of the speakers I had been coordinating with and got their slide shows and supporting materials. To support these slides I compiled a reference sheet of links for all of the important publications and websites referred to by the education orientated speakers throughout the week.

In response to both the written and verbal feedback I have organised further training which was not covered in the SUT week. A presentation on Finance for Students will be given at the August Education Working Group, Postgraduate Student Issues will be addressed at the September Education Working Group and Academic Policy Bootcamp will be hosted in the new USI Ceann Aras when we have moved in.

1. **Part time Officer Training**

To prepare for Part Time Officer Training 2013 I composed and published a survey to gather data and feedback on previous training events. The survey received good responses and I have compiled the results into a report for Officer Board.

1. **Class Rep Resource Pack & Education Handbook**

The final two sections of the Class Rep pack (Council Chair Guide and System Guide) are near completion and will be sent to the designer shortly before being published electronically.

Unfortunately the time needed to deal with the BOI loans has led to a delay in the Education Handbook but I hope to have it completed shortly and available to all MO’s electronically.

1. **Grant Information Seminars**

I was invited to give a presentation on the Student Grant Scheme by St. Anthony’s and Claddagh Credit Union in Galway on August 9th. I prepared and delivered a slide show presentation and met with attendees to answer questions. The turnout was good considering the weather was exceptionally good. I will be making my presentation available to anyone hosting a grant information seminar. I will also be attending the Athlone SU Information Evening on August 14th and assisting them in any way I can.

1. **Irish Times Video**

The Irish Times has launched a ‘Campus Times’ section on their website in partnership with USI. Part of this includes information videos for new students. I worked with the UCD Education Officer to compose and shoot a short piece on the Student Grant Scheme SUSI. The videos were shot in UCD with members of UCDSU and TCDSU.

1. **National Council Effectiveness Group Meeting**

The meeting of the group took place on August 7th and was hosted by NCI SU. As well as contributing to the discussion I acted as secretary for the meeting which covered all aspects of National Council Events. The minutes were typed up and I have summarised them into a short report for National Councils information. The original minutes are also available.

1. **SUSI**

The USI President negotiated with SUSI and the Department of Education and Skills on the creation of a USI-led formal constructive feedback body to indicate and address issues with the new system. I have worked with the Deputy President to draw up a Terms of Reference document for the group according to the guidelines set out by SUSI and the Department. We have contacted the MO’s of the institutions requested and determined the time needed to be involved. A standardised feedback sheet will be distributed to all MO’s in September and the group will meet to analyse the data and report the findings and recommendations to SUSI.

SUSI agreed some weeks ago to design, print and fund the grants poster this year. Though I have been in constant communication I have yet to receive the graphic and a confirmation date for the completion which was scheduled for the end of July. I apologise for the frustration this is causing many officer, I will be sending the required information onto our own designer to have a graphic done up and sent out as soon as possible.

1. **Casework**

I have been dealing with a lot of casework covering a variety of subjects but the most common are not surprisingly grants and student finances. Many of the cases I have dealt with are students who have not accepted CAO offers yet so I hope the caseload will decrease when college begins and students are orientated.

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Purpose** |
| 13/7/12 | HEA | HEA Briefing for USI Officer Board |
| 13/7/12 | National Student Survey | Status of the project and planning of the pilot |
| 13/7/12 | Jim Murray IOTI | NSS and TU discussion |
| 17/7/12 | Department of Education & Skills | Roundtable meeting with stakeholders and American Education Leaders. |
| 23/7/12 | Jim Murray IOTI | Discussed IOTI working with USI |
| 25/7/12 | Coursehub.ie | Oct Launch & working with USI |
| 3/8/12 | Bank of Ireland | Student Loans and SU engagement |
| 9/8/12 | Galway Grant Evening | Presented at the Student information evening hosted by St Anthony’s & Claddagh Credit Union. |

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 20/7/12 | National Council | SUT |
| 23/7/12 | Office Meeting | Planning of the week ahead |
| 1/8/12 | Officer Board |  |
| 2/8/12 | Pleasetalk | 3rd Annual Please talk Conference |
| 7/8/12 | NC Consultation Meeting | Working group on the effectiveness of National Council |

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:**

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| **Date** | **Description** | **Purchaser** |
| 2/8/12 | Lunch | DITSU/Pleasetalk |
| 7/8/12 | Lunch | NCI SU |

**Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán don Leas / Report of the VP for Welfare**

1. **4th European Road Safety Day**

I attended the fourth European Road Safety Day in Nicosia, Cyprus on July 25th.

* The ‘Active Involvement of Youth in Road Safety’ Conference was organised by the Cyprus Presidency to commemorate the fourth EU Road Safety Day and sought to explore ways of incorporating young people in road safety. The need to raise awareness among young people was seen as crucial, as road deaths constitute the biggest reason of young deaths in Europe.
* The findings of the conference from the workshops and discussions were presented in a press conference at the end of the day. Findings include a zero tolerance approach for drink drivers, better targeted information campaigns, a continuous and comprehensive road safety education from a young age and special programmes of re-training of repeated traffic offenders.
* The 4th European Road Safety Day provided an invaluable platform to discuss and exchange best practices and most importantly, to raise awareness – of the dangers of irresponsible driving and of the importance of wearing seatbelts.
* In terms of workshops I attended the Education & Training workshop. We focused on peer to peer education and all agreed road safety awareness and education should be lifelong. I really enjoyed the opportunity to attend, as USI were the only organisation in Ireland invited to send a delegate. There was no cost involved for USI.

1. **PleaseTalk Forum**

The 3rd Please Talk Forum took place in DIT, Aungier Street on August 2nd 2012. I worked alongside Aimee o’ Callaghan in DITSU & Nigel o’ Callaghan in Inspire and other members of PleaseTalk steering committee with planning the forum and on the day I presented with Aimee & Nigel. The forum’s Keynote address was from Jerry Buttimer TD. There was also breakout sessions during the day, ( I facilitated one) to encourage attendees to plan for the year ahead & answer the following questions ; How are you planning to embed the PleaseTalk message in your college? What has worked well in the past and what might work well in the future? Considering the issues affecting students in the current climate, is there a new way we could promote Please Talk? The forum was a great success and we received great feedback from attendees. Thank you to all in DITSU for hosting the forum this year.

1. **Sexual Health:**

Sexual Health Roadshow:

I have met with Crisis Pregnancy programme and our plans are well underway for the USI Sexual Health Education Roadshow 2012/2013. We have decided there will be 5 dates starting from late October and finish in April. We are working on a long list of key stakeholders and a template for how the Roadshow will look like at a host college. It promises to be an entertaining and educating fun packed Roadshow. I will keep you all updated on this.

Free Condoms:

Since June, I have been in contact with a number of organisations in order to facilitate free condom supplies to MOs. I would like it to be a fairer system across the country and between bigger and smaller colleges. Unfortunately some colleges had put in orders and had been catered for already and so I am now in plans of putting in a system for next year to make it fair for all. I have also received a list of colleges who are not receiving free condoms and I have requested that Think Contraception ring fence condoms for these MOs.

1. **Accommodation**

Rent Book: The text in the USI Rent Book 2012 has been updated and we have included the new elements of the three most important checklists for students renting while in college. The Rent Book launch is set for the Monday 20th of August.

Distribution Plan: I have also been working on a distribution plan of rent books for MOs according to student numbers and requests and I am setting up a system for next year also.

1. **Road Safety**

My proposal for a Road Safety Expo, (similar to the Mental Health Campus Tour) has been sent to the Road Safety Promotion Officer and we are now working out dates and possible stakeholders. We are confident that there will be little to no cost to MO Host colleges. I am confident this will be successful and assist colleges who have never had road safety campaigns before.

I am also working with the Road Safety Promotion Officer in the RSA in developing an application form for the RSA Shuttle which has been block booked by USI. This will be sent out to all welfare officers once we have agreed on content.

1. **Student Survival Cards:**

I have been working with Drinkaware on the new edition of the Student Survival Guide and it has now gone to print. We will also be working with them on the launch of the Student Survival Guide 20102/2013 in September, Date to be confirmed.

1. **Training:**

I organised Welfare Top Up Training, DIT Aungier Street, August 3rd

Welfare Officers took part in the modules/sessions that covered:

* Welfare Campaigns – USI VP Welfare, VP Campaigns & VP Equality and Citizenship
* Sexual Health – Siobhan o Higgins
* Active Listening – Bodywhys
* Alcohol Awareness- Andy Hargreaves, HSE
* FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centre) – Emma Cassidy, Legal Intern FLAC
* Welfare Crews – USI VP Welfare
* Welfare Officer Reflective Session – USI VP Welfare

There was no cost to welfare officers and the training event proved to be very enjoyable and beneficial for the Welfare Officers. I would ask like to thank DITSU for their assistance and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Glenn Fitzpatrick for all his help and his ideas for a social event on the Thursday night; Karaoke party & Drag Show at The George.

1. **MO Engagement:**

Mater Dei Students’ Union: I have been talking with the Welfare Officer and explaining the support I can provide this year and answered various questions. I have sent him a starter support pack and anything he has missed out so far, i.e handouts from Welfare Top Up, Campaign directory etc. I am also planning a meeting with the Deputy President to visit Mater Dei SU in late August regarding how USI can support the SU team.

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Purpose** |
|  |  |  |
| 30/07 | Roisin Guiry | Condom allocation & Sexual Health Education Roadshow |
| 30/07 | Phone conference- PleaseTalk Steering Committee | Planning for PleaseTalk Forum |
| 01/08 | Aimee o Callaghan & Nigel o Callaghan | PleaseTalk Forum, final planning in DIT, Aungier Street |
| 07/08 | Consultation Group - NCI | Effectiveness of National Council |

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 23/07 | Office Meeting | Weekly work plan update |
| 30/07 | Office Meeting | Weekly work plan update |
| 31/07 | VP Campaign & VP Equality and Citizenship | Planning Welfare Campaigns module- Welfare Top Up Training |
| 07/08 | OB Phone Conference | Weekly work plan update |
| 09/08 | Officer Board | Referenda Campaign Planning |

**Membership Engagement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **CO** | **Details** |
|  |  |  |

**Expenses Claimed –N/A**

**Expenses Claimed – N/A**

**Expenses Claimed –N/A**

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Purchaser** |
| 02/08/2012 | Lunch | PleaseTalk/DITSU |
| 03/08/2012 | Tea | DITSU |
| 07/08/2012 | Lunch | NCISU |

**Annual Leave: N/A**

**Report of the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship**

**Tuairisc an Leas- Uachtarán do Chomhionannais agus Saoránacht**

**Marriage Equality**

I organised a briefing meeting from the Director of Marriage Equality and a member of LGBT Noise for all of USI Officer Board in USI Ceann Aras on Monday, 30th of July.

I wrote all of the content for the TellYourTD.com website, as amended for the issue of marriage equality, and I consulted the organisation Marriage Equality about this to make sure it was all correct. Once there are one or two small changes completed in relation to design, we will actively promote this website.

I planned the USI Marriage Equality campaign, including for the march for marriage. I also took orders for t-shirts from member organisations for the March for Marriage and I requested the wording on the front and back of the t-shirts.

I helped UCD Students’ Union with the Rainbow Wedding outside the Department of An Taoiseach on Tuesday, 31st of July. I assisted in relation to language usage when promoting the event and ideas for the running order of the event. I also did a reading at the event on the future we want for LGBT persons in Ireland and had this speech published afterwards on Broadsheet.ie

I participated in a debate about Marriage Equality on SunshineFm the evening after the Rainbow Wedding

I wrote an article for the Cork Independent (published on 26th of July) on the meanings behind LGBT Pride festivals and I discussed marriage equality in the article

I represented USI at Cork Pride and marched with UCC Students’ Union and UCC LGBT. I organised for photographs to be taken at the event also

I attended a banner-making event for the March for Marriage in Panti Bar on Capel Street in Dublin on the 9th of August and met some members of different LGBT societies there

I emailed my own TDs in my Cork North-West home constituency regarding marriage equality. I had a follow-up phone call with one of them about the issue and discussed arranging a meeting with him in coming months.

**International Students**

I wrote an outline for items that should be covered in the staff training DVD relating to international students which USI is creating with the Irish Council for International Students. Some of the key items include information on the work of Students’ Unions and USI and accurately communicating information on living costs in Ireland.

I spoke with the President of DIT Students’ Union in relation to the issue of a hardship fund for international students. I have started working on an action plan in relation to this issue and a briefing document that can be distributed to Students’ Unions.

**Students with Disabilities**

I spoke with Niamh Hayes in the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) on the 27th of July. We discussed the possibility of conducting another longitudinal study for students with disabilities in third level. We also discussed raising awareness of hidden and physical disabilities and working together to promote opportunities to graduates with disabilities.

**Pink Training**

I went through proposals from Students’ Union to host Pink Training along with the President and the Deputy President and I looked at colleges that would be suitable. Out of the applications received, UCC was selected as the most suitable venue based on accommodation and costs. I set the dates 16th-18th of November for Pink Training.

I notified some speakers and LGBT societies of the date and location of the event and asked speakers for feedback from last year and workshop suggestions

I submitted a sponsorship proposal to Accenture for the event and I am awaiting a reply. I also discussed with them the possibility of them participating in a workshop on Inclusion and Diversity in the workplace at Pink Training.

I met with our new General Manager in USI to discuss this event and sought his advice on applying for further sponsorship to alleviate some of the costs

**Mature Students**

I set the 13th of October as the date for the Mature Students’ Conference. I compiled a draft of the content for the conference this year.

**Gender Equality**

I met with the Gender Equality Officer in UCC on August 9th to discuss the organisation of a national networking and ideas generating event. We discussed possible locations for this event and content. We also discussed the female participation seminars which USI will be holding in the New Year and potential speakers for these events.

I helped to add people to a new national Gender Equality Student Activists page on Facebook

**Environment**

The Gender Equality Officer in UCC is also an intern from Friends of the Earth and on August 9th we discussed a Green Training event that they are organising in October and the potential for USI to help out with the promotion and organisation of this event. I also requested to be introduced to others in the same organisation so that I can have a network of people to seek information on in relation to environmental issues.

I set up a closed Facebook group for Environmental Student Activists which can be used by societies and student representatives

**Transgender**

I met with Broden Giambrone, the Director of Transgender Equality Network Ireland, on the 2nd of August to discuss the upcoming Transgender EU Council which is being held in Dublin. I also discussed plans for Pink Training topics with him and how Pink Training can be more inclusive of Transgender issues

**Violence in intimate relationships and sexual assault**

I have been preparing content for the piece of research USI are working on with Cosc – (the centre for the prevention of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence) on violence in intimate partner relationships. I have been assessing the format of the ‘Hidden Marks’ survey conducted in the UK and how we can build on that.

I had a meeting with Women’s Aid on the 31st of July to discuss continued collaboration with USI. We discussed the research piece USI are doing on violence in youth relationships and how we might link in to promote awareness of this issue.

**Welfare Top-Up Training**

I prepared a presentation slot on how to run inclusive campaigns as part of the ‘How to Run Welfare Campaigns’ presentation that was delivered by the Welfare Officer, Deputy President and I on the 3rd of August. We participated in a planning meeting on the 31st in relation to this.

**Campaign for Children**

I met with Helen McGuire from this organisation on the 2nd of August and we discussed how USI can support this referendum campaign in line with our mandate from Congress 2012

**Equality Handbook**

I have started working on the Equality Handbook. It will include contact information for officers and for organisations working on equality issues in Ireland. It will also include information on the key areas under the Equality brief in USI. Each Member Organisation will receive a copy when it is complete.

**National Council Effectiveness**

I participated in the group meeting on this issue on Tuesday 8th of August in NCI

**Organisational Work**

I compiled a comprehensive list of equality-related contacts for officers

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Purpose** |
| 30.07.12 | Briefing from Marriage Equality and LGBT Noise in USI Ceann Aras | To ensure that all of Officer Board are knowledgeable on the LGBT issues we are campaigning for and the language used |
| 31.07.12 | Meeting with Christine from Women’s Aid in their offices | To discuss working together for the year and her input on the research piece USI are conducting on violence in intimate youth relationships |
| 31.07.12 | Rainbow Wedding with UCDSU outside the Department of An Taoiseach | To call on Taoiseach Enda Kenny to announce his support for marriage equality |
| 02.08.12 | Meeting with Helen McGuire from Campaign for Children | To discuss how USI can best fulfil our mandate on Children’s Rights from Congress 2012 and how we can work together |
| 02.08.12 | Meeting with Broden Giambrone, Director of Transgender Equality Network Ireland | To discuss working together, the upcoming Transgender EU Council in Dublin and Pink Training |
| 09.08.12 | Meeting with UCC Gender Equality Officer & intern with Young Friends of the Earth, Sian Cowman | To discuss Green Training and Gender Equality events |
| 03.08.12 | Welfare Top-Up Training in DIT | To deliver a presentation with the Welfare Officer and Deputy President |
| 05.08.12 | Cork LGBT Pride | To represent USI and march with our banner along with UCCSU and UCC LGBT |

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
|  |  |  |
| 30.07.12 | Start of week meeting in USI HQ | To outline each of our plans for the week |
| 23.07.12 | Start of week meeting in USI HQ | To outline each of our plans for the week |
| 07.08.12 | Start of week meeting in USI HQ | To outline each of our plans for the week |
| 07.08.12 | National Council Effectiveness Meeting | To make proposals on improving the effectiveness of national council |
| 09.08.12 | Affiliation referenda planning | Planning for our upcoming affiliation referenda |

**Report of the Vice President for the Border, Midlands & Western Region**

1. **CO planning visits**

Since SUT I have been trying to meet with each sabbatical officer in my region to plan the year ahead. I have met with every campus bar one at this stage and I hope to meet with them the week I get back from annual leave. I wanted to figure out how I could support each sabbatical officer in their role. Following on from this I have updated my diary to ensure I am on campus in each MO at the best possible times. There were a number of action points resulting from all the meetings and most have been completed bar a few that are ongoing research. Details are below.

1. **Class rep strategy**

After speaking to a number of my colleges it became clear that people were unsure of how they could improve their current rep systems. I looked at the different rep systems around the country and drew up a document of recommendations and best practice and made this available to my region. I can send it on to anyone that wants it.

1. **Constitutional reviews**

A number of MOs are going to undergo significant constitutional reviews in the coming year. I have spent a significant amount of time looking at the different constitutions and drawing up my recommendations for the different colleges based on the outcomes they want. At the moment there are four colleges who are going to be running reviews.

1. **Training ideas**

Another area that came up while visiting MOs was the in house training they provided for their reps, officers and convenors. I have been looking into the different training provided around the country and will be compiling a list of what the different colleges provide both in England and in Ireland.

1. **Guidelines for sponsorship**

With a large number of new incoming sabbatical officers looking for sponsorship for different events and campaigns this year I was asked to provide a list of guidelines for an MO on the best way to go about this. Tralee IT created a brilliant marketing pack for distribution to businesses so I drew up a guideline document for my region and I also distributed IT Tralees on the region Facebook. Thank you to Niall in Tralee for sharing that with me.

1. **Education officer brief**

An MO in my region wants to introduce another sabbatical officer into their union. To support this I updated a job description I had on an education officer and wrote it from a quality perspective so it would appeal to the college management.

1. **Bulk buying report**

I completed the bulk buying report and it has been placed on google documents so the MOs who haven’t sent in their information can add to it.

1. **Casework**

I have an ongoing education case going on with one of the colleges who are proving to be extremely difficult to deal with I am hoping it will be sorted before I leave on annual leave as it is proving very stressful to the student involved.

1. **Referenda**

There are a number of referenda due to take place in my region in the upcoming year. At the moment there are three due to take place and I have been gathering information to help plan for the event. I was also involved in an officerboard planning day to prepare for the upcoming referenda.

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 15.07.12-20.07.12 | SUT | Annual training |
| 18.07.12 | Regional council | SUT regional council; discussed the motion the region proposed at the last area council, the 50km walk and feedback on the week. |
| 19.07.12 | Officerboard | SUT officerboard; discussed feedback on the week any improvements we could make. |
| 23.07.12 | Officerboard teleconference | Reporting on the week ahead plans |
| 24.07.12 | DKIT planning day | We spent the day planning out the year and adding in any campaign ideas. See below |
| 25.07.12 | GMIT Castlebar | We spent the day planning out the year and adding in any campaign ideas. See below |
| 26.07.12 | NUIG | We spent the day planning out the year and adding in any campaign ideas. See below |
| 30.07.12 | STACS | We spent the day planning out the year and adding in any campaign ideas. See below |
| 30.07.23 | Marriage equality teleconference | Teleconference briefing from LGBT Noise and March for marriage. |
| 01.08.12 | Dublin | Area officer meeting to discuss the marketing plan for the year ahead. |
| 01.08.12 | Dublin | Officerboard |
| 07.08.12 | Officerboard teleconference | Report on the week ahead |

**Membership Engagement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **CO** | **Details** |
| 24.07.12 | DKIT | Spent the day planning the year ahead and looking at campaign ideas. We identified the key areas for the union for the year ahead and discussed ideas for campaigns. We discussed class rep systems at length and the different structures of the executives that exist and how they could benefit from an additional education officer. All the action points have been completed. |
| 25.07.12 | GMIT Castlebar | Spent the time working through the year seeing how I can link in with the campus and what I can do to further engagement. We spoke at length about increasing USI awareness on campus and how I could be of benefit to both officers during the year. The minutes were emailed on and all the action points have been completed. |
| 26.07.12 | NUIG | Discussed the main priorities of the union for the year and how I can help out with them. There were a number of action points and the minutes of the meeting were emailed the next day. I am looking into conveynor training options for the education officer and I have to set out dates with the welfare officer that I will help with campaigns, aside from this all action points are completed. |
| 26.07.12 | GMIT | I had arranged a meeting on campus but after I arrived on campus it had to be put off because the people I was meeting were delayed in a different meeting in Mayo. |
| 30.07.12 | STACS | Spoke about SUT and feedback from the college. We discussed plans for the year ahead and pin pointed areas I can help out. I am still researching into a number of things on behalf of the President. |

**Expenses Claimed – Public Transport** None

**Expenses Claimed – Own Transport**

**Own Car Transport (Note 2)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | To | From | Purpose | Rate | Distance | Cost | Tolls | Total |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 02.07.12 | Dublin | Sligo | OB return journey | .45c | 415.54km | 186.99 | 5.60 | 192.59 |
| 04.07.12 | Bundoran  return | Sligo | Regional bonding return journey | .45c | 68.4km | 30.78 | None | 30.78 |
| 09.07.12 | Newcastle | Sligo | OB bonding return journey | .45c | 454.16km | 204.37 | None | 204.37 |
| 13.07.12 | Dublin | Sligo | HEA meeting return journey | .45c | 415.54km | 186.99 | 5.60 | 192.59 |
| 16.07.12 | AIT | Sligo | SUT return journey | .45c | 229.5km | 103.26 | None | 103.26 |
| 24.07.12 | DKIT | Sligo | CO planning visit | .45c | 393.72km | 177.17 | none | 177.17 |
| 25.07.12 | GMIT CB | Sligo | CO planning visit | .45c | 176.06km | 79.22 | None | 79.22 |
| 26.07.12 | Galway | Sligo | CO visit NUIG and GMIT return journey | .45c | 277.12km | 124.70 | None | 124.70 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **Total** | **1,104.68** |

**Parking (Note 4)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Purpose | | Cost |
| 26.07.12 | NUIG | Parking CO visit | | 3.40 |
|  |  |  | Total | **3.40** |

**Weekend Work Allowance (Note 5)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Purpose | Approved By | | Cost € |
| 15.07.12 | SUT training Sunday |  | | 20 |
|  |  |  | |  |
|  |  |  | Total | **20** |

**Out of Office Meal Expense (Note 6)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Purpose | Rate | | Cost € |
| 02.07.12 | Red Cow | Over night stay | Dinner | | 12.50 |
| 04.07.12 | Bundoran | bonding | Lunch | | 10.00 |
| 15.07.12 | AIT | SUT Sunday evening | Dinner | | 12.50 |
| 24.07.12 | DKIT | CO planning day | Lunch | | 10.00 |
| 25.07.12 | GMIT Castlebar | CO meetings | Lunch | | 10.00 |
|  |  |  |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  | Total | **55.00** |

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality:**  Dinner and Snack DKIT 24.07.12, lunch NUIG 26.07.12

**Annual Leave:** None

**Report of the Vice President for the Southern Region**

1. **HEA Meeting with Fergal Costello**

On July 13th the team and I met with Fergal Costello in the Higher Education Authority. Fergal discussed the HEA’s plans for the upcoming year and engaged in a lengthy discussion with us prior to his presentation. Among the topics discussed was the Students’ Assistance Fund, The RGAM Model, The Student Contribution Charge and The Hunt Report.

Following the meeting the team and I returned to Ceann Aras where we recapped on our meeting with Fergal. Anything we were still unsure of was ironed out and I’d like to think each member of Officer Board benefitted as much as I did.

1. **Students’ Union Training (SUT)**

On the week of July 16th the team and I hosted SUT in Athlone Institute of Technology. A wide range of workshops were available to our Member Organisations in everything from Negotiation Skills, dealing with college authorities and effective political lobbying to name a few.

Evening entertainment was provided prior to the workshops which included bowling, quasar and a gala dinner to finish off a successful week.

1. **Consultation Group on the Effectiveness of National Council**

On August 8th members of Officer Board and SU Sabbatical Officers from around the country met at the National College of Ireland to discuss the effectiveness of National Council. The group discussed a number of issues such as challenges under the current structure, working groups, scheduling and training modules.

By the end of the day the group had successfully formed a strategic plan to be submitted to National Council for approval.

1. **USI Ents Training 2012**

On August 10 USI’s Deputy President and I hosted Entertainments Training in The Grand Canal Hotel County Dublin. Similar to SUT, the aim of the day was to train and benefit our MO sabbaticals with emphasis this time on Entertainment Officers. There were a number of speakers present who covered everything from Positive PR, Sponsorship, Class Trips and Accounting. Entertainments Forum took place at the end of the day to touch base of upcoming Freshers Week/Fortnight activities.

1. **Other**

I have also launched this year’s USI Entertainments page on Facebook which can be accessed by all sabbaticals in the country. Along with this I have launched @usi\_south on Twitter to keep the Students/SU Officers of the South updated on my work and whereabouts.

The Southern Region Bulk Buying list has also been completed and distributed to the relevant officers. I plan to elaborate more on this during my MO visits which I have scheduled for the final week of August.

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Meeting/Event |
| July 13 | HEA Meeting with Fergal Costello |

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Meeting/Event | Location |
| July 13 | HEA Recap | Ceann Áras |
| July 16 | SUT | Athlone |
| August 1 | Officer Board | Ceann Áras |
| August 8 | Effectiveness of National Council | NCI |
| August 9 | Refernda Planning | Ceann Áras |
| August 10 | Entertainments Training | Grand Canal Hotel Dublin |

**Membership Engagement:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **MO** | **Details** |
| August 9 | Carlow College | Contract Negotiations |

**Expenses Claimed:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Purpose** | **Cost** |
| July 13 | Train Ticket | HEA Meeting | €17.20 (return) |
| August 1 | Train Ticket | Officer Board Meeting | €17.20 (return) |
| August 9 | Train Ticket | Referenda Planning | €12.00 |
| August 9 | Dinner | Referenda Planning | €10.00 |
| August 9 | Train Ticket | Referenda Planning | €12.00 |
|  |  |  | **€68.40** |

**Declaration of gifts/hospitality:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Description | Purchaser |
| July 15 | Dinner | I.T. Carlow |

**Annual Leave:**

|  |
| --- |
| July 23-31 (7 days) |

**Tuairisc an Leas-Uachtarán don Ghaeilge**

1. **Traenáil na gCumann (Irish Language Training)**

I have continued to work with Conradh na Gaeilge regarding Traenáil na gCumann in October.

I intend to introduce a number of new elements to the training to make it more effective in the future:

* The training will be more skills focused, and directed towards workshops rather than seminars. It is my intention to draw on the skills of past officers, both in terms of consultation and during the event.
* I have also examined the possibility of changing the days to Saturday and Sunday in order to get the maximum benefit of from the event for all involved.
* Also for the first time, I hope to have sabbatical officers doing a module on working with SU’s – so be expecting a call in the coming weeks!

1. **Seachtain na Gaeilge – AMLÉ**
   1. **Seachtain Náisiúnta (National Week)**

I am continuing to work with Seachtain na Gaeilge, in terms of the many Irish festivals that fall between our remits. It is my intention to meet with Seachtain na Gaeilge again in the coming month as work continues on the *clár* of events for USI’s upcoming Seachtain na Gaeilge in January/Febuary. Again I will be speaking to MO’s in the coming weeks as the clár begins to come together.

* 1. **Féiltí Áitiúla (Local Events)**

I have been working with a number of the Oifigigh na Gaeilge (OnaG) who are still in the country and I am helping them plan and co-ordinate their festivals in terms of sourcing materials, organising events etc. Unfortunately some of the festivals will clashing with each other but I intend, if I cannot attend the events, certainly to provide whatever help I can in the lead up to the events.

* 1. **Féile AMLÉ**

I have been continuning work on USI’s Seachtain na Gaeilge, scheduled to take place after Christmas. I have a draft *clár* prepared for the events in the coming weeks and will circulate it once it has been agreed with parcticipants.

The aim of the week is to highlight the Irish Language, more importantly the idea is to improve its profile in areas where it has not thus far been prominent.

1. **Poiblíocht**

This month, as well as my fortnightly column in *Gaelscéal*, I have done a number of Radio interviews, as well as a column in *The Munster Express*, aimed at students beginning in first year.

* I spoke on Raidió na Life, following UCD’s Rainbow Marraige.
* I was also asked to speak to Raidió na Gaeltachta’s morning programme following the announcement of Bank of Ireland’s loan scheme.
* I was also asked to return to Raidió na Life to speak on the Loan scheme following the RnaG interview.
* I was contacted by the *Munster Express* in Waterford, to write an article about starting in third level and USI’s work at third level.

1. **Feachtais (Campaigns)**

I have been working on two campaigns in the past month. I intend to roll out these campaigns in MO’s in the first and second term this year in order to promote the Irish Language. Both campaigns focus on visibility and opportunity to use the language in day to day life.

* I do Aghaidh!; This campaign focuses on the visual, increasing the amount of Irish visible on campus, thereby encouragaing people to use individual words or phrases more regularly. I hope to speak further to MO’s regarding the roll-out of this in the coming month.
* Labhair Amach! This campaign styled on the Glac Leis campaign run by Conradh na Gaeilge. The idea is to get a database of what services are available in the different MO’s and encourage students to use them. The benefit of such a campaign is two-fold; first incereased use of Irish on campus, second ensuring that the services are actually available rather than just window-dressing.

1. **Bunachar Ranganna Gaeilge**

I have begun compiling a database of availability of Irish classes in, or near, MO’s around the country. When finished I intend to disseminate them so that SU’s will be able to utilise them, or at least will have the information for their students should they be asked.

1. **Oifigigh na Gaeilge**

Since last *Comhairle Náisiúnta*, I have met with a number some MO’s in order to begin the process of enhancing the representation of the Irish Language within their Union’s.

Following the meetings there are a number of next steps to take before I can actually look at implementing such a move. Also there are different issues pertaining to the different MO’s I am dealing with which requires careful preparation, and planning. Nonetheless I am 100% confident that we can considerably increase Irish language representation around the country in a number of MO’s before the end of the year.

Currently I am dealing with only;

* QUB
* UU
* DIT
* NUS-USI

I do believe however that this number can be increased, depending on how things proceed in the above mentioned organisations.

1. **Bliain na Gaeilge**

Following attendance at the second meeting of Bliain na Gaeilge there are a number of opportunities open to USI in the coming year which would allow us a chance to play a meaningful part in the celebration of the Irish Language.

Obviously, Seachtain na Gaeilge AMLÉ, is already at the planning stages, and would occur at the very beginning of Bliain na Gaeilge. I do however intend to tie in the above mentioned campaigns to the year’s events ensuring that USI plays a central part in Bliain na Gaeilge. As a central part of this I am already aware that crossover will have to take place with my successor following Congress ’13 to ensure USI remains an integral part of the celebration.

1. **An Siopa Leabhar**

I have continued to be in touch with An Siopa Leabhar in Dublin regarding getting a discount for USI students at the beginning of the academic year. The hope is still that it will be a digital offer, but also that it will allow participating students a chance to accrue benefits during the year by shopping with An Siopa Leabhar.

I am still waiting for the board of Management to meet and finalise exactly how they want to go ahead with the deal. I will continue to keep an Comhairle Náisiúnta informed regrding any developments.

1. **An t-Oireachtas**

The Conradh na Gaeilge student co-ordinator and I have continued to work together in order to deliver the best deal for students ahead of Oireachtas na Samhna 2012 in Letterkenny. I have been keeping Cumainn Gaelaigh and their Reachtairí (Auditors) informed of our progress and hope to have a final decision on what Oireachtas na Gaeilge will be offering to us in the coming weeks in terms of a package ticket.

1. **Comhairle na Gaeilge**

I have scheduled the first meeting of Comhairle na Gaeilge, for August 30 in the Elizabethan Rooms in TCD. The meeting will be the first of its kind in many years and will provide a further roadmap for the USI Irish Language campaign during the year.

I intend to hold these meetings every 6 weeks and utilise them as an update / brainstorming forum for myself and the rest of the OnaG as the year goes on.

My secondary hope is that it will give the impetus to OnaG and cumainn gaelaigh to work closer together in the future. I also hope it will allow them to work closer with USI in the future, as this has not always been the case in the past.

1. **Comhdháil Gaeilge AMLÉ**

I have begun work on an Irish Language Conference to be held later in the year. The aim of the conference is to bring together members of USI – sabbats and students, members of the Irish Language sector, members of Government, and others, in order to further examine what role of mutual benefit students and Earnáil na Gaeilge can play together.

**Appendix**

**Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Purpose** |
| 23/7/12 | Bliain na Gaeilge | Student Representation |
| 25-26/7/12 | Ceardlanna Foras na Gaeilge | Irish Sector Workshops |

**USI Meetings/Events Attended:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Meeting/Event** | **Details** |
| 23/7/12 | Bord na n-Oifigeach | Meeting of Officerboard |
| 30/7/12 | Bord na n-Oifigeach | Meeting of Officerboard |
| 7/8/12 | Bord na n-Oifigeach | Meeting of Officerboard |

**Membership Engagement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **CO** | **Details** |
| 31/7/12 | UCD | Rainbow Marraige |
| 1/8/12 | UCD | Áras na Mac Léinn |
| 2/8/12 | DIT | Please Talk Forum |
| 7/8/12 | QUB | OnaG |
| 8/8/12 | UU | OnaG |
| 8/8/12 | NUS-USI | OnaG |

**Declaration of Gifts and Hospitality**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Description** | **Purchaser** |
| 31/7/12 | Use of office while in town | TCD |
| 8/8/12 | Cup of coffee | UU |