

The National Council of the Union of Students in Ireland

Minutes
National Council USI, NC54.7
Athlone Institute of Technology
7^ú Nollaig, 2013

Chairperson: Richard Hammond
Deputy Chairperson: Chris Newell

NAMES APPEARING ON THE ATTENDANCE LIST:
(No liability accepted for difficulties deciphering manuscript notations)

WITSU
Christina Fitzharris

CITSU
Danny O'Donovan Ciara O'Connor Michael Buckley

UCCSU
Podge Haughney Annie Hoey Owen Kirby
Gavin Lynch Frahill

NUI Galway SU
Sean Kearns Declan Higgins
Catherine Breslin

NCISU
James Duffy Greg O'Donoghue

DITSU
Glenn Fitzpatrick Fiachra Duffy

AITSU
Andrew Slevin Michaella Hannich Daniel Coulter

ITSSU
Helen Campbell Stephen Doak

GMITSU
Sam O'Neill Michael Kerrigan

ITTSU

Eoin Dunne

Glenn O'Brien

XXXX Campbell

QUBSU

Niall McShane

J Tiernan

STACSSU

Amée Dunne

TCDSU

Tom Lenihan

Seán Reynolds

Jack Leahy

Stephen Garry

IADTSU

Sinéad Booth

Laura McDowall

Bord na nOifigeach, AMLÉ

Joe O'Connor, President

Denise McCarthy, Vice President for Welfare

Kevin Donoghue, Vice President Border, Midlands & Western Area

Cat O'Driscoll, Vice President Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance

Ciara Guinan, Vice President Southern Area

Laura Harmon, Vice President Equality & Citizenship

Feidhlim Seoighe, Leas Uachtarán don Gaeilge

Paddy Guiney, Vice President for Campaigns

Standing Orders were raised to allow several representatives from University of Limerick Students' Union and Dublin City University Students' Union to attend the meeting.

1. Minutes of NC54.6

The minutes of the previous meeting (DIT 9^ú Samhain) were proposed by Cat O'Driscoll AMLÉ and seconded by Kevin Donoghue AMLÉ and were **passed without objection**

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Pre Nominated AOB

Several items were submitted for discussion under Any Other Business.

It was agreed to move agenda Items 5 & 7a forward to facilitate external speakers.

5. Presentation by Susan Donlon (Dublin Aids Alliance) on Gonorrhoea Information Campaign.

Susan Donlon presented details of a Gonorrhoea Information Campaign and sought support from Member Organisations. Members present pledged to support the campaign. The Vice President for Welfare thanked Susan for her time which was endorsed by applause.

7.a) USI – Siptu Agreement

Brendan Cunningham presented details of a proposed agreement between USI and Siptu which would allow USI members to access the services of Siptu in the event of a workplace dispute.

Following discussion and questions, Brendan Cunningham left the room.

The President formally presented the proposal for agreement.

The proposal was agreed.

4. Officer Reports / Tuairisc na nOifigeach

An Leas Uachtarán don Gaeilge had nothing to add to his report as circulated. There were no questions.

The Vice President for the Southern Region had nothing to add to her report as circulated. There were no questions.

The Vice President for Border, Midland and Western Region had nothing to add to his report as circulated. There were no questions. The VP for the Border, Midland and Western Region congratulated GMITSU on passing a recent referendum reaffirming their affiliation to USI.

The Vice President for Equality and Citizenship noted that in addition to her report she had attended the We're Not Leaving Youth Assembly. She also completed several media interviews. She also expressed thanks to Queen's University Students' Union for hosting Pink Training. She also thanked everybody who assisted in organising the event.

Stephen Garry TCDSU queried the delegate fee for Pink Training and noted that it had increased €5 per year for the past two years. The VP for Equality & Citizenship noted that the increased delegate fee was a result of increased projected costs and cross border currency costs. She added that the past two Pink Training events marked milestones in its history (20th & 21st Anniversary) which resulted in gala dinner events which aren't typically included in Pink Training. She further noted that the actual cost of Pink Training is not reflected in the delegate fee and that the event is subsidised by USI. It is hoped to attract a commercial sponsor for the event and some progress has been made in that regard.

The Vice President for Campaigns presented his report as circulated. Since his report was completed, he had travelled to GMIT to assist in the USI Re-affiliation referendum. He noted that work on the Student Nurses Campaign is ongoing. Michael Buckley, ITTSU asked for an update on designs for badges to be circulated to nursing students and suggested that feedback be sought before production.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance presented her report. In addition to her report, she noted that the launch of the survey on student engagement will take place on Thursday next.

Michael Buckley, ITTSU queried the how the QQI sub-board was constituted. The VP for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance outlined the plans for various sub-boards and noted that USI is represented on each one.

Glenn Fitzpatrick DITSU asked if progress was being made on USI's proposals to reform the grant.
The VP for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance noted that it was on schedule to be completed for Annual Congress 2014.

The Deputy President & Vice President for Welfare had nothing to add to her report as circulated. She thanked MO officers for participating in ASIST training.
Stephen Garry, TCDSU highlighted the benefit of ASIST and suggested that it be noted in crossover for future years.

The President presented his report as circulated.
He congratulated GMITSU on their recent USI Re-affiliation and Constitutional referenda.
He added that Colm Keaveney T.D. has been removed from the President's Advisory Panel due to his recent affiliation to a political party.

Stephen Garry, TCDSU noted that the response to the SAF survey had been very low and asked how it could be addressed.
The President noted that the data received to date had been useful, and agreed that greater participation in surveys would be more beneficial.

6. **Items for Information / Le Eolas**

a) **Amárach Research Student Finances Survey**

The VP for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance outlined plans for a Student Finances Survey would be rolled out from 16th December. She stressed the importance of participation and noted that several incentives were in place for students to take part.

b) **5KM Fun Run**

The VP for the Border, Midlands and Western Region outlined plans for the 5KM Fun Run due to take place after the meeting.

c) **Dual Day-Long Workshop**

The Dual Day-Long Workshop takes place on Thursday 12th December in Ceann Áras na Mac Léinn. The theme is "Challenging the Crisis".
The President urged all MOs to participate.

d) **Dates for Congress Motions / Nominations**

The Chairperson outlined the dates for the opening and closing of nominations and motions for Annual Congress 2014.

Motions

Opening date for the submission of motions: 10th January 2014
Closing date for the submission of motions: 7th February 2014

Nominations

Opening date for the submission of nominations:	16 th January 2014
Closing date for the submission of nominations:	13 th February 2014
Deadline for the withdrawal of nominations:	20 th February 2014

It was agreed to discuss agenda Items 7b & 8c together.

7.b) Memorandum of Understanding: USI & Conradh na Gaeilge **8.e) Irish Language Campaign**

An Leas Uachtarán don Gaeilge referred to the Memorandum of Understanding which had already been discussed at a previous meeting of National Council. He highlighted the benefits of the continued partnership between USI and Conradh na Gaeilge.

The Memorandum of Understanding between USI & Conradh na Gaeilge was formally proposed by An Leas Uachtarán don Gaeilge and seconded by the President.

It was passed unanimously.

An Leas Uachtarán don Gaeilge noted that Seachtain na Gaeilge 2014 was being launched today. The event will run from 17th – 28th March 2014. A promotional leaflet will be distributed.

7. Items for Agreement / Le Socrú

c) *Amendment to Schedules of USI Constitution RE: Affiliation of Members Mid-Year*

The President noted the proposed changes to the schedules. He added that the changes had been advertised in accordance with procedures outlined in the constitution.

The proposal of Amendment to Schedules of USI Constitution Re Affiliation for Members Mid-Year was formally proposed by the President and seconded by the VP for Welfare.

It was passed unanimously.

It was agreed to discuss agenda Items 7d & 8c together.

7.d) *Investigation into joining European Regional Network* **8.c) *ESU Board Meeting 65 Report***

The President and the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Quality Assurance gave a detailed presentation on the recent ESU Board Meeting and outlined the background for the European Regional Network.

Stephen Buckley, ITTSU asked if there would be any obligation on USI to adopt policies agreed by the European Regional Network.

The President noted that the group is an umbrella body and no decisions would be binding.

The proposal to join the European Regional Network was formally proposed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Quality Assurance and seconded by the President.

It was passed unanimously.

8. Items for Discussion / Le Bheith Pléite

a) *Minister Quinn Meeting Report*

The President presented a comprehensive report on his recent meeting with the Minister for Education & Skills, Ruairí Quinn.

A discussion on the meeting ensued.

b) *Jobs.USI.ie*

The President noted that a draft design for Jobs.USI.ie would be available for the next meeting of National Council. He added that the platform would include guidance and advice on:

- CV preparation
- Cover letters
- Interviews
- Social Media
- Employment Rights

Sam O'Neill, GMITSU asked if it would be possible to include a database of part-time jobs.

The President replied that the website was being co-sponsored by Hays Recruitment and that a part-time jobs section was unlikely.

He added that the USI website could facilitate a part-time jobs database.

d) *USI Quarterly Financial Update*

The President noted that USI is developing policy on building a reserve for USI. He highlighted the difficulty in budgeting for the year when income dates could not be fixed. He noted that the current year had presented a particular challenge on the basis that a high level of campaigns activity was required early in the year due to the timing of the annual budget.

The USI General Manager, Ben Archibald presented a comprehensive update on USI's finances.

Podge Haughney, UCCSU asked for a breakdown on costs associated with the National Campaign.

The President agreed to forward a detailed breakdown.

Sean Kearns, NUI Galway SU queried the practice of sourcing products from Chinese suppliers. He asked if any research was done on companies' human rights records.

The General Manager replied that it is always the preference to source products in Ireland or Europe and the practice of dealing with Chinese suppliers is a last resort.

James Duffy, NCISU queried the timeframe of UCDSU's repayment plan.

The General Manager noted that repayment will be completed in full by November 2014.

9. A.O.B. / A.G.E.

NUS

Glenn Fitzpatrick, DITSU noted the correlation between NUS' political difficulties with the Thatcher government and the current challenges being experienced by Irish Students' Unions. He suggested that an invitation be sent to the NUS President to attend the next national Council to share experiences.

Nelson Mandela

The President referred to USI's significant role in the campaign against apartheid and proposed a letter be sent to the South African Ambassador to offer condolences on the death of Nelson Mandela.

This was unanimously agreed.

The Chairperson thanked AIT Students' Union for hosting National Council and wished everybody a Happy Christmas.