**Adam Clarke – Southern Region Manifesto**

Hello there and thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto! My name is Adam Clarke, I'm the current President of Carlow College Students' Union, the smallest MO within USI at present, and I'm hoping to convince you to elect me as your next VP for the Southern Region. I'm the first student from CCSU to ever run for a position in USI so words cannot express how proud and excited I am to have the chance to have you read this! In my two years as President I have secured autonomy for my SU, gained independent control of our finances from Carlow College, and negotiated my successor's contract with the college to increase the pay to an actual living wage with a reasonable starting and ending date that includes dates when students are not on campus which I hope will improve the quality of work life for whoever succeeds me as President of CCSU. I have a can-do attitude and fight for what I believe is right for students, even in the face of adversity. Don't believe me? By the time you read this I'll be a Protestant that held a referendum on Repeal the 8th in a Catholic College and believe me that's been an experience and a half!

When I'm not practicing politics, I love video games, magic tricks, and playing with my dog Rusty who is named as such because I found him in a washing machine! If you ever see me don't be afraid to come over and say hello and maybe have a chat with me about why I'm running. I'm a huge extrovert and love getting to meet new people, so don't be shy! Come say hi!

1. **Integration of Further Education Colleges**

As the President of what is currently the smallest MO within USI, I cannot praise USI enough for treating all MO's with the same amount of respect and giving us all the same platform to speak regardless of size. I also have USI to thank for all that I have accomplished in my two years as President, and as such I know that USI's influence would also be of benefit to FE Colleges. As Vice-President for the Southern Region, one of my priorities would be to continue the great work done by USI thus far and reach out to the FE colleges in the Southern Region. As it currently stands I have provided CCSU's constitution to the current VP for the Southern Region to be used as a template for FE colleges to draft their own constitutions. Given my experience of leading an SU with a small student body, I believe that I have the skills required to help FE colleges integrate into USI and thus, expand the student movement within Ireland.

1. **Data Protection Readiness and Autonomy**

As many within USI are aware, new Data Protection Laws are set to take effect in Ireland very soon as part of EU regulations. These new laws will affect automatic membership of a Students' Union upon entry to college, which until now has been standard practice for Students' Unions everywhere. As VP for the Southern Region, I intend to be at the forefront of this change, working with the rest of USI Officer Board to prepare for these changes, as well as working directly with Students' Unions within my region to help them prepare for potential changes at a local level. Where one might see a challenge in adapting to new laws, I see an opportunity for SU's to further their autonomy, an issue that is very important to me given my own fight for autonomy from Carlow College as President of CCSU, and thus, something I'm confident I can advise Student Leaders on.

1. **USI Presence on Campuses**

Speaking from my own experience within CCSU, the VP for one's Region visiting their campus instils one with a sense of great pride in their SU. It's a morale boost for the executive, and it allows both staff and student body to see first-hand the kind of work that USI does at the national level. As Vice-President for the Southern Region, I would intend to continue the outstanding work done by the current officer by visiting every campus in the Region at least twice a year, working to keep SU executives informed of work being done by USI and assisting with any local/national campaigns taking place on campus at the time.

1. **Access to Education for Unauthorized Immigrants, Refugees, and improving access to those with Special Needs**

Having grown up with an older sister with Special Needs and having a close friend from Brazil living in Ireland illegally has made me very aware that for a lot of people education can be difficult to access for a variety of reasons, I'm very conscious of the privilege I have had in being able to more easily access education than others and I also hold the value of education close to my heart. As Vice-President for the Southern Region, I intend to work closely with the Vice President for Equality and Citizenship to advance access to education for Unauthorized Immigrant, and Refugee Students, and work to improve resources for Students with Special Needs accessing Education.

1. **Self-Care Resources for SU Executives**

In my time as a student of CCSU I was an unpaid part-time Education Officer for one year and a full-time paid President for two years. In my experience part-time positions are rewarding but undoubtedly stressful and acting as a leader of my SU I often had to deal with criticism from staff and students alike that would often cause stress. Having led a team of part-time unpaid officers I could see at times the effect that stress would have both on them and myself. It's never an easy issue to deal with and so as Vice-President for the Southern Region I intend to work with the Vice-President for Welfare to provide resources and information to SU executives that will afford them opportunities for self-care. I like to think of myself as a friendly and outgoing extrovert, I know the vast majority of my little student body by name, and I'm fortunate enough to have made lots of wonderful friends thanks to working with USI. So with that in mind I intend to make the effort to really get to know the officers that I'll be working with so that they know that they can reach out to me with any problems or if they need to vent, and I like to think that the better I know an officer, the more I'll be able to help them in regards to self-care.