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# KAYLA GAFFNEY FOR USI VP FOR THE DUBLIN REGION

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## ABOUT ME

My name is Kayla Gaffney. I am a final year Education and Training student in Dublin City University. During my time in DCU I have been heavily involved in volunteering, societies, the access service and the disability services outreach programme. I began my involvement with the students' union by being selected to represent students on the welfare working group in 2014 and have remained in this group throughout my entirety of University. I have a passion for student politics and have been an engaged class representative throughout my four years in College.

I am running for the position of Vice President for the Dublin Region as I believe I have the skill set, experience and drive to ensure that I can implement changes to make USI more student friendly and see more engagement from our sabbatical teams. The Dublin region has such strong MO's, with a diverse student body and a high student population. We should be at the forefront of change within Ireland but the students on the ground are far too distant from the USI Officerboard. I believe that it is time that USI goes back to basics. I may not have been a sabbatical officer or even a convenor, but I am passionate about student politics and I want to be the voice for students, a student speaking for students.

The focus of my manifesto will be on strengthening the Dublin Region through Engagement and Development, Access to Education, the Technological University bill and of course general support.

If you have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to approach me during or after hustings or contact me throughout my campaign by emailing [Michaela.Gaffney24@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:Michaela.Gaffney24@mail.dcu.ie)

Mise le meas,  
Kayla Gaffney.



# ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

As this position is newly founded, I believe there is opportunity to define it as a whole. If elected, my aim for the role will be to create strong communication links between myself and each MO within the region before the academic year begins.

In my personal opinion I believe that we need to ensure that the VP for the Dublin region is physically present on campus with sabbatical teams during local campaign weeks. If elected I plan on visiting each MO regularly and offering my time to lend a helping hand and get involved in their initiatives. If USI are only present on campus for their own campaigns and for affiliation referenda, students will never get to see what they are paying for. I also plan to attend each MO's class representative council once a semester to give students an update as to what is happening with USI and how they can contribute to any working groups or campaigns.

Another area that I plan to address is the relative lack of interaction and communication between each institution. To improve this and create a well connected and organised working region I plan to actively engage with each MO's through bonding and training days before the start of the academic year to give each college the opportunity to meet each other with the intent of creating a stronger communication link between those who've never worked with each other. By doing this I hope it will lead to more intervarsity links for events as well as society events and campaigns. I personally believe that communication and engagement are detrimental to the success of our national union and I believe that this is where our Dublin region can prosper. The benefit of Dublin Region is the close proximity of all of our educational institutions and to generate any social change, you need numbers.



## ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

As USI represents student, I believe we can not take our eye of the ball in regards to the National Campaign. I want to ensure my main focus to always be on Education. Obviously with important referendums on the way I believe that the focus has shifted slightly. Although I am in support of students getting involved in political issues and fighting for issues I believe that our main focus needs to be what will directly influence EVERY SINGLE student within Ireland, the issue of education funding..

I also wish to work with sabbatical teams to try lobby for more Institutes to offer access points through the HEAR scheme as some MO's have private access routes, such as ITB Reach programme which isn't as widely advertised or ITT access programme which only offers places to students in Clondalkin or Tallaght, if implemented this could see a rise in numbers of disadvantaged students entering education, As the saying goes, Education is a right, not a privilege.



## TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY BILL

The merger between DIT, ITB and ITT Student Unions' is at the forefront of the Technological University bill. After speaking to various students and sabbatical officers from the aforementioned institutes involved with the merger, I wish to implement a working group which would consist of the VP for Dublin, a sabbatical Officer and two class representatives from each MO that would meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss any updates about the merger. This would ensure that the students on the ground have some influence and knowledge of the progress or lack of to really back to council.

If the past few weeks are anything to go by, this merger will not just pass with the sabbatical officers pushing it through.

Fianna Fail will continue to postpone a decision unless pressure is put on them. USI needs to ensure they rally the troops and get this completed so that students are no longer in limbo.

Coming from a MO that has already been through a merger and having to move campus myself I would like to offer additional training to Welfare officers within each MO, as moving campus or integrating courses can have a huge impact on a student without realising it. The training will provide the officers with information on how to deal with issues such as upholding ethos, moving campus and changing social circles, each which will have a different impact on every student.



## DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE REGION

I am aware that there are many developments going on within the Dublin region. With a Student Hub under construction in DCU, a Student Centre in planning in TCD and the construction of Grangegorman in DIT we need to help support sabbaticals to assure that the facilities that our students receive will be better than ever before. I want to ensure that USI support local unions through the difficult months of construction and that student spaces and engagement is monitored. We should be working together to assist each other during these times of development.

USI is a network, one which benefits the students of Ireland and has their voice heard. I want to ensure that we try to build on relationships with all educational institutions within the Dublin region. There are smaller institutes that have grown and implement policy and procedures to ensure the autonomy of their unions but so much more needs to be done to protect our students. If elected I will ensure that I am a support for growth to all colleges within Dublin and try to build and maintain relationships with unions that are not official members of the body. Together we are stronger.



## SUPPORT

It goes without saying that, as your potential VP for the Dublin Region, it is absolutely vital that I am present and available on all educational institutions in the Dublin Region as frequently as possible. I will be on the ground, assisting unions and sabbatical officers in their own campaigns where possible, but also national USI campaigns. I will ensure that I attend local class rep councils where possible so that the national unions message and priorities filter through to our student body. By being engaged with students on a local level and incorporating them into national plans it will strengthen the bond between MO's and USI. In order for USI to grow we need the continued support from the students we represent.

Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto, if you have any questions or queries relating to any of my points, please do not hesitate to get in touch via [michaela.gafney24@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:michaela.gafney24@mail.dcu.ie)

Thank you.,  
Kayla Gaffney.